AFRICA RECOVERY

United Nations Vol. 10 No. 1 May 1996

UN system launches Special Initiative to spur Africa's development

By **Margaret A. Novicki**

Calling on the world to forge a "new partnership" in support of Africa's development, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali — along with World Bank President James Wolfensohn and heads of the New York-based UN agencies — formally launched the System-wide Special Initiative on Africa on 15 March. The UN's largest coordinated action in support of a continent's peoples, the Special Initiative is a multi-billion dollar programme of concrete actions to accelerate African development over the next decade by expanding basic education and health care, promoting peace and better governance, and improving water and food security.

Evan Schneider / UN

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali

Speaking via video conference from Geneva to the launch ceremony at UN headquarters in New York, Mr. Boutros-Ghali told the ambassadorial corps, representatives of UN agencies and other invited dignitaries that the Initiative demonstrates the commitment of the entire international community to the development of a continent "that is for us a constant concern."

The Initiative also represents a "new milestone" in the effort to strengthen collaboration between the UN and its specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions, the Secretary-General said. Each of the Initiative's 14 components has a lead UN agency or agencies, and the World Bank has agreed to mobilize the bulk of the estimated $25 bn the Initiative will require over a 10-year period.

Mr. Wolfensohn stressed that the timing of the Initiative is key, noting that some African countries are showing "dramatic improvement" in their economies, with nearly a dozen enjoying gross domestic product growth rates above 6 per cent a year. At the same time, however, official assistance is declining and private capital flows are not filling the gap, putting "the remarkable gains of some countries in serious danger," Mr. Wolfensohn said. "There is a need for us to give that push, that help, that assistance which can keep the momentum going," he said.

Andrew E. Bernstein

At the Special Initiative launch in Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (left), OAU Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Vijay Makhan (centre, back), and ECA Executive Secretary K.Y. Amoako (right).

Providing a response on behalf of Africa via satellite from Addis Ababa, the seat of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and headquarters of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, the current OAU chairman, told the audience that the Special Initiative "holds great promise of success" because it is "firmly based on priorities for development that we in Africa have identified for ourselves" — basic education, primary health care and the advancement of women, among others.

Also participating in the New York launch were Mr. James Gustave Speth, Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP); Mr. Prabhakar Narvekar,

turn to page 10

Africa shows signs of economic recovery

But structural problems persist, say ECA, Bank and IMF

By **Nii K. Bentsi-Enchill**

Africa's 2.3 per cent growth rate in 1995, the highest since 1990, provides "modest grounds for optimism," the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has announced. Rising gross domestic product (GDP) of 0.7 per cent in 1993 and 2.1 per cent in 1994 confirms the upward trend of recovery, said the ECA's 1996 *Report on the Economic and Social Situation in Africa*. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank have provided even higher estimates of Africa's growth in 1995: 3.2 and 3.8 per cent, respectively.

Declaring this "a time of opportunity for Africa, a time of responsibility," the Executive Secretary of the ECA, K.Y. Amoako, told the 6-8 May Conference of Ministers in Addis Ababa that "we can now have enough hope to will ourselves a better future."

Africa is no longer an "undifferentiated

turn to page 13

SPECIAL REPORT:
Global Coalition for Africa conference in Maastricht
pages 24-31

AFRICA RECOVERY

United Nations
Vol. 10 No. 1 May 1996

contents

Cover Story

UN launches innovative Special Initiative on Africa

New hope for continent's development 1
An accent on education, health 8
A new partnership for the World Bank 12

FAO

Also in this Issue

Signs of economic recovery 1
Emergencies and conflict 3
UNCTAD IX a 'turning point' 4
New debt plan back to the drawing board 6
Great Lakes refugee crisis 18
Burkina promotes mining 21
Africa slowing the spread of AIDS 22

SPECIAL REPORT

The Global Coalition for Africa

'Governance' tops GCA agenda 24
The first five years 25
Vigorous academic discussion 26
NGOs call for a broader forum 29

Country Focus

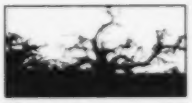
Zaire's economy sinks deeper 14

UN promotes political reconciliation 17
Zairians bear brunt of refugee burden 18

Howard Davis / UNICEF

Departments

Agenda 33
Books 33



Baobab 32

Briefs 34
Watch 36

Africa Recovery is published in English and French by the Library and Publications Division of the United Nations Department of Public Information, with support from UNDP and UNICEF. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or the publication's supporting organizations. Material from this newsletter may be freely reproduced, with attribution.

Correspondence should be addressed to:
The Editor, Africa Recovery,
Room S-931, United Nations, New York 10017 USA
Tel: (212) 963-6857 Fax: (212) 963-4556 Fax/Modem: (212) 963-1193
e-mail: unafrica@undp.org

Subscribe to *Africa Recovery*

Annual subscriptions are available to individuals for $20 and to institutions for $35. Please send an international money order or make cheques payable in US dollars, drawn on a US bank, to the "Africa Recovery Trust Fund" and send to Circulation at the address shown above. For those who lack the means to pay the subscription fee, a limited number of complimentary subscriptions are available. Please send a clearly written application to the editor.

Editor-in-Chief
Salim Lone

Managing Editor
Mark Thomas

Deputy Editor
Nii K. Bentsi-Enchill

Staff Writer
Margaret A. Novicki

Editorial Assistant
Frehiwot Bekele

Production
Parvati McPheeters

Circulation
Alice Wairimu Kariuki

Africa Recovery is printed on recycled paper.

Peace processes suffer setbacks

Liberia plunges into renewed violence, while Sierra Leone peace talks stall

LIBERIA

Liberia's warring factions began to withdraw from the capital of Monrovia at the end of May after seven weeks of renewed fighting that shattered the 13th peace accord in the country's six-year civil war. Once the country's safest area, Monrovia succumbed to a frenzy of rampaging and looting in April, prompting an exodus of tens of thousands of Liberians and about 2,000 resident foreigners, including humanitarian aid workers.

The fighters were withdrawing following a decision by their leaders to hand over control of the city to ECOMOG (Economic Community of West African States Military Observer Group). The 8,000-member ECOMOG force, which had threatened to withdraw from Liberia if the fighting continued, was reported to be gaining control of Monrovia.

A West African emergency summit aimed at halting the civil war was called off at the beginning of May when seven of nine regional leaders failed to attend. Foreign ministers of the nine nations, however, used the meeting to adopt a plan aimed at returning Liberia to the Abuja peace agreement. The plan calls for an immediate cease-fire, demilitarization of the capital, and the return of an estimated $20 mn worth of looted material and equipment.

In a 31 May resolution on Liberia, the Security Council decided to extend the UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) until 31 August, contingent on the Liberian parties' willingness to cooperate with the Abuja agreement. The resolution also urged all member states to provide financial, logistical and other assistance to the ECOMOG force.

Belgium and Denmark offered to pay for additional peace-keeping battalions from Ghana and Burkina Faso to help boost ECOMOG's waning capacity. The US maintained its position not to get involved militarily, but reiterated its willingness to provide up to $30 mn for equipment and training.

Up until the end of May Liberians flocked to the port of Monrovia in a desperate attempt to find transport out of the country. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata pleaded with West African countries to accept the Liberian refugees. "Unless the door is open to them, a lot of people, many of them women and children, may die," Ms. Ogata said. Since the start of the war in 1989, over 150,000 people have died, and nearly half of the country's 2.5 million people have been displaced.

The UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Liberia, Mr. James Jonah, said that Liberian opinion leaders strongly suggested that the only way out of the crisis was for the United Nations to take over Liberia as a trust territory, an option he said would only be possible if donor governments are willing to assume the costs and danger involved in addressing the Liberian tragedy. According to studies, the United Nations spends on Liberia in one year what it spends on Bosnia in five days.

SIERRA LEONE

Efforts to bring an end to the bloody civil strife in Sierra Leone suffered a setback in late May when peace talks between the government and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel movement were suspended. Côte d'Ivoire Foreign Minister Amara Essy, who is mediating the talks, said they were deadlocked over RUF's demand that the government expel the South African mercenaries employed to battle the rebel group.

Liberian children remain victims of continuing conflict.

Giacomo Pirozzi / UNICEF

Prospects for peace appeared to have improved after the government and the RUF agreed on 23 April in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire, to a "a continued cessation of hostilities with a view to creating a climate of confidence conducive to the conclusion of a peace accord." The joint communique was signed by President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who took office in late March after the country's first truly democratic elections in 29 years, and RUF leader Foday Sankoh.

At the two-day meeting, which was hosted by the UN and Ivorian government, President Kabbah and Mr. Sankoh agreed to establish three joint working parties to deal with the issues of a peace accord and encampment, disarmament, demobilization and resettlement of combatants.

By mid-May, however, the two sides were still far apart on the issue of power sharing, with the RUF continuing to reject the elections and calling for the dissolution of the government. The government argues that it alone has the mandate of the Sierra Leonean people.

ANGOLA

Expressing "profound regret at the overall slow pace" of the Angolan peace process, the UN Security Council has extended the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) until 11 July. By 19 May, some 33,000 UNITA soldiers had been quartered, far short of the 50,000 soldiers that UNITA leader Joans Savimbi said would be registered by 15 June.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali reported that the quartering had slowed considerably by the end of May, casting doubts over UNITA's commitment to the June deadline. In a letter to Mr. Savimbi on May 28, the Security Council also noted that the integration of UNITA troops into the Angolan armed forces was not concluded on 15 May in accordance with previous agreements. The Security Council urged Savimbi and Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos to maintain a firmer commitment to the peace process in order to avoid further delays.

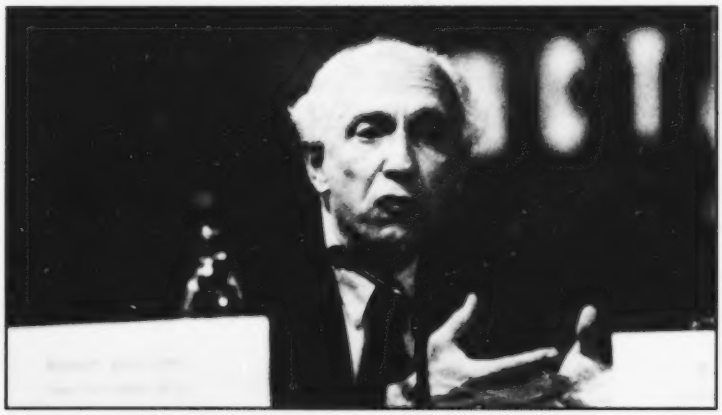
On 1 March, Mr. Savimbi and President dos Santos had agreed to accelerate the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol, which was adopted two years ago to facilitate the peace process. ■

UNCTAD receives 'new lease of life'

Organization streamlined to focus more on technical assistance to developing countries

By ***Colleen Lowe Morna***
Midrand, South Africa

On a confident and forward-looking note, the ninth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD IX) ended in Midrand, South Africa, on 11 May. Despite a concerted drive by some Western countries to have the organization disbanded altogether last year, UNCTAD Secretary-General Rubens Ricupero told a closing press conference that the organization had now been given a "new lease of life."



John Isaac / UN

UNCTAD Secretary-General Rubens Ricupero stressing a point at the UNCTAD IX conference.

He said this had been underscored by the head of the US delegation, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Melinda Kimble, who declared that the purpose of the conference was not to debate the survival of UNCTAD, but rather how to make it succeed.

Attended by over 2,000 senior officials from 134 countries, including 62 ministers, UNCTAD IX was also a "turning point" for the organization, said conference president and South African Trade Minister Alec Erwin. A former trade unionist whose no-nonsense approach and polite disdain for UN protocol brought a breath of fresh air and sense of urgency to the fortnight-long deliberations, Mr. Erwin noted that the strong message from developing countries "was not that we demand this or that, but that here is a problem, how do we solve it."

As UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said in opening the conference on 27 April, UNCTAD must continue to serve as the main forum for discussion on development issues; provide technical assistance to developing countries; and remain the "conscience and advocate" of the developing and most disadvantaged countries.

The conference's final document, the Midrand Declaration, confirmed this mandate, noting that UNCTAD has "a clear comparative advantage in tackling trade-related development issues," and should continue "to facilitate the integration of developing countries and countries in transition in the international trading system."

The declaration urged UNCTAD to retain its focus on "the special needs" of developing countries, particularly the least developed countries (LDCs). It also called on UNCTAD to continue to provide a forum for discussions on development strategies and policies in a globalized world economy.

In another affirmation of its special role, UNCTAD was asked to analyze proposals for a multilateral investment agreement (MIA) that would govern the conditions under which foreign companies establish themselves in signatory countries. Some Western countries had suggested that initial discussion on the MIA should begin at the first ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in December. Mr. Ricupero told a press conference that the intention was to present a balanced view on the pros and cons of a global approach to foreign direct investment.

African countries have so far reacted to the MIA proposals with some caution. Egyptian Ambassador Mounir Zahran, chairman of the African Group at the conference, said "the general view is that we are willing to be convinced. If it would give something more than current bilateral agreements, in which all the obligations are placed on the host country and none on the investor, we might see an interest in it."

UNCTAD depoliticized, NGOs charge

Some 100 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which had met in Midrand on 24-27 April, lobbied hard for their positions during the conference and were critical of its outcome. In their own declaration, they charged that governments had compromised the "soul" of UNCTAD by depoliticizing its mission to bridge the gap between North and South and by playing up the organization's technical assistance functions.

Claiming that UNCTAD IX did not pay sufficient attention to the crucial issues of debt, aid and commodity policies, the NGOs said that "global responsibility and international cooperation are declining at this crucial time when the challenges are greater than ever."

African Group delegates joined NGOs in expressing disappointment about the conference document's failure to deal more strongly with debt issues. Successive speakers emphasized that the crushing debt burden of African and many other developing countries makes it impossible for them to break out of the vicious cycle of poverty. Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa said that his country spends $5 per capita servicing debt each year, compared to the $2 per capita it spends on health.

The conference's final document did, however, call for continued action by the Paris Club of official creditors on bilateral debt relief, particularly for the poorest and most heavily indebted countries, and urged non-Paris Club creditors to take appropriate measures. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund were in turn urged to "expedite ongoing consideration" of multilateral debt relief, while other international financial institutions were "invited to consider" appropriate and similar efforts. The document noted the positive impact debt relief measures "can have" on the investment climate and development prospects, "provided they are accompanied by sound macroeconomic and structural reform efforts."

At the heart of the concern shared by UNCTAD and NGOs is that while globalization provides new opportunities, it also may take a huge toll, especially on the poorest countries.

What price liberalization?

"Countries enter this system from very different starting points... [and] the impact of globalization and liberalization is uneven," the Midrand Declaration observed. LDCs, particularly those in Africa, and other developing countries are "constrained by weak supply capabilities" and are "unable to benefit from trade" while marginalization, "both among and within countries, has been exacerbated," it added.

As Mr. Ricupero, a former Brazilian finance minister, put it, globalization "is a powerful tool both for integration and marginalization. It promises for the first time in history to bring billions of men and women in fast-growing countries fully into active participation in the world. But in contrast, hundreds of millions of other people fear that the same forces threaten to shut them out — perhaps forever — from the promise of prosperity."

NGOs said that some poor countries, by opening up their economies in accordance with the agreements reached in the Uruguay Round, are being forced to deindustrialize. They quoted UNCTAD studies that found no direct correlation between liberalization and devaluation on the one hand, and growth and diversification of output on the other. These reports showed that countries which achieved a significant degree of liberalization in the 1980s — such as Burundi, Tanzania, Malawi and Gambia — suffered severe economic dislocation and poor growth rates.

Also noted was the example of South Africa, which after years of international isolation, had a protected economy that is only now beginning to open up. In contrast, many of its neighbours undergoing IMF and World Bank-sponsored structural adjustment programmes (Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, for example) have moved much further ahead in liberalizing their trade regimes. The result is that these countries are now complaining of being flooded with cheap South African imports that are wiping out their industrial base at a time when Southern Africa is supposed to be moving toward closer and more equitable economic cooperation.

In further contrast, South Africa still maintains exchange controls. It has vowed to move cautiously in its economic reform programme in order to minimize the social costs that have been a common feature of economic restructuring elsewhere on the continent.

At a roundtable of heads of government at the start of the conference, Costa Rican President José-Maria Figueres challenged African governments to eliminate their armies if they were really serious about development. "We can't continue to talk about [debt and aid] over and over. Issues such as fighting corruption and good governance: that is a responsibility that must fall squarely on our shoulders. We need a new development paradigm," he said.

In another roundtable discussion — one of several events held during UNCTAD IX — Ugandan Minister of Trade and Industry Richard Kaijuka noted that between 1986 and 1993 the price of coffee declined by 70 per cent at a time when Uganda was dependent on coffee exports for 64 per cent of its foreign exchange earnings. Yet with 10 per cent growth in GDP last year, Uganda is listed in the World Bank's *Global Economic Prospects and the Developing Countries* (see page 13) as being one of the fastest growing economies in the world. "Marginalization and decline can be reversed," Mr. Kaijuka declared, "if everyone plays their part."

While UNCTAD will continue to be a crucial forum for debating how this is to be achieved, UNCTAD IX saw a shift in emphasis toward the practical assistance that it can offer developing countries. Structurally, UNCTAD has cut back its nine divisions to four. These will handle its future work in four major categories: globalization and development strategies; investment, technology and enterprise; international trade and commodities; and services for development and trade efficiency.

According to Mr. Erwin, the Midrand Declaration stresses the fact that UNCTAD "is moving away from single issues to a holistic analysis." The Midrand Declaration also points out that the internal reforms in UNCTAD are a response to the challenges of the global economy and are designed to "give real meaning to the partnership for development."

One example of UNCTAD's partnership work was the 2-4 May "Africa Connect" meeting jointly organized with the South Africa Council of the International Chamber of Commerce to promote international and cross-country investment and trade in Africa. Another example is its Global Trade Point Network (GTPNet). Launched in 1994, GTPNet has rapidly grown to involve 97 countries (including 17 LDCs) in an electronic network of trade-related information, transactions and services from which African countries are increasingly benefitting, with fully operational Trade Points in Algiers, Tunis, Cairo and Harare. The GTPNet has a Web site at http://www.unicc.org/untpdc and claims to be visited 100 times a minute. Trade by Internet now faces the challenge of making electronic payments a secure reality. ■

Modest economic upturn for African LDCs

After years of virtual stagnation, the 33 African nations categorized by the UN as "least developed countries" (LDCs) are achieving a modest economic upturn, reported the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). African LDCs averaged a 2.2 per cent increase in gross domestic product (GDP) in 1995, compared with an annual average of only 0.6 per cent over 1990-94, said UNCTAD's *Least Developed Countries 1996 Report*, released in April. If normal rainfall patterns hold, then African LDC growth rates are forecast to average 2-3 per cent in 1996 as well.

In comparison, Asian LDC economies grew by 4.6 per cent in 1995, while those in the Pacific and Caribbean were expected to do little better than the 1.2 per cent they recorded in 1994. Overall GDP growth for all 48 LDCs averaged some 3.2 per cent in 1995, above the world average of 2.6 per cent.

In addition to the beneficial impact of economic reform, the rise in world commodity prices, especially for coffee and cotton, was a key factor in the improved performance of African LDCs, UNCTAD reported. It warned, however, that this improvement in their terms of trade is "likely to be temporary." And while the liberalization of world trade through the Uruguay Round agreements may provide LDCs with important long-term opportunities for growth, the report observed, in the short term they risk greater marginalization since few LDCs have internationally competitive industries and many may face higher food import prices and an erosion of existing tariff preferences in their export markets.

In this light, Mr. Renato Ruggiero, Director of the World Trade Organization (WTO), has proposed that rich countries apply zero tariffs to the export goods of the LDCs. This, he said, would pose no danger to industrialized countries, for which goods from LDCs constitute a tiny fraction of their total imports. "If we grant zero duty for the LDCs, we enhance the possibility of foreign investment coming in," Mr. Ruggiero said at a 27 April roundtable of UN agency heads and ministers moderated by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali during the high-level segment of UNCTAD IX.

New debt plan sent back to drawing board

Developing countries criticize World Bank/IMF conditions; creditors refuse to provide new money

By ***Rose Umoren***
Washington, DC

The latest plan to increase relief for the mainly African, heavily-indebted poor countries has left its joint authors, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), under fire from both debtors and creditors. The proposed "Framework for Action" on multilateral and bilateral debt was approved as "an appropriate basis for further work" at the 22-23 April meetings in Washington. But developing countries said the six-year qualifying period for relief was too long and the eligibility criteria too restrictive. The industrialized nations' Group of Seven (G-7) in turn rejected the prospect of funding the plan with over $6 bn in new money.

With sub-Saharan Africa's rising debt burden and mounting arrears underscoring the urgency of the situation (see table), finance ministers and central bank governors from developed and developing countries said the Fund and Bank should "move swiftly," at the latest by their September annual meetings, to agree with Paris Club bilateral donors and recipient countries on a programme of action and its financing.

Just before the April meetings, World Bank President James Wolfensohn said the debt crisis "cannot be solved by international financial institutions alone" and that the Bank and Fund deserved credit for shifting the debate from "if" to "how" creditors could help heavily-indebted poor countries. IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus said that "the G-7 objections are critical, and we must resolve them first."

On 23 April, the Development Committee — a joint Bank/Fund body that sets policy on "the transfer of real resources to developing countries" — acknowledged the inadequacy of debt relief mechanisms and endorsed six principles "to guide further action." The committee emphasized that the new framework should ensure that "adjustment and reform efforts are not put at risk by continued high debt and debt-service burdens."

The Bank/Fund plan aims to lower the total debt-to-exports ratio of highly-indebted countries to 200 per cent and debt service to 20-25 per cent of exports, levels considered sustainable by the Bank. The Paris Club would raise the maximum bilateral debt relief offered in the Naples terms from 67 to 90 per cent, while bilateral creditors would finance the bulk of an $8-11 bn trust fund from which eligible countries could borrow to buy back discounted bilateral debts or quickly pay off multilateral debts.

Rose Umoren is a Washington-based correspondent of InterPress Service.

Long probation period

But the plan requires a track record of good performance which the developing countries' Group of 24 (G-24, an offshoot of the Group of 77) described as "excessively long and rigid." A heavily-indebted poor country (HIPC, in the new jargon) could be considered for enhanced Paris Club debt relief only after three years of meeting targets. It would take another three years of good performance to be considered for multilateral debt relief.

With a six-year unbroken track record rare even in very strong economies, it would take "nine to ten years" at best to get any debt relief, argued G-24 Chairman Qazi Alimullah of Pakistan. "African countries," which form the bulk of the HIPCs, "have already suffered enough because of high indebtedness," he said. The G-24 argued for more realistic analysis of export projections, aid availability, fiscal constraints and the overall debt/GDP ratio. A viable solution "would require additionality of resources, so as to preclude any transfer of limited concessional resources from one set of objectives to another," the G-24 added.

However, major creditors led by the G-7 (US, Japan, Germany, UK, France, Italy and Canada) refused to provide new money for the bulk of the plan's financing. Even if major creditors agreed to raise Paris Club relief to 80 per cent, one G-7 official said, it was "unthinkable" to expect high contributions to the trust fund from them. Formally rejecting the proposed levels for Paris Club relief and trust fund contributions, the G-7 called for a modified plan from the IMF and World Bank which "should involve the fullest use of their own resources to finance debt reduction." The G-7 chairman, US Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, said: "Further action by the Paris Club [should] not be a prerequisite for multilateral action."

The US and Canada both said the six-year unbroken track record before consideration for multilateral debt relief was too late in the relief process. While a record of commitment to reform must be established, multilateral relief must be provided "as early as possible if we are to break these countries out of their unsustainable debt trajectories," argued Canadian Finance Minister Paul Martin. He said the first three-year track record for enhanced Paris Club debt reduction should also suffice for multilateral debt reduction, "if complemented by forward-looking commitments," for example, on the "quality of public expenditure." In this light, some argued that after years of strong performance, Uganda should qualify for multilateral debt relief rather than begin a fresh probation.

Facing such criticisms from the dominant shareholders, the IMF in particular held off-the-record briefings on "new details" as the meetings progressed. The most significant detail that emerged was that the Bank and Fund have no intention of writing off any debt, hence the need for the trust fund. The most they plan to do, said Fund officials, is to extend maturities on affected loans. This explanation did little to win over either creditors or debtors.

Officials said between eight and 20 coun-

New principles for debt relief

- The objective is overall debt sustainability on a case-by-case basis, to provide an exit strategy from the rescheduling process.
- Action is envisaged only when the debtor has shown ability, through a track record, to put the exceptional support to good use.
- New measures will build as much as possible on existing mechanisms.
- Additional action will be coordinated among all creditors involved, with equitable participation.
- Action by multilateral creditors will preserve their financial integrity and preferred creditor status.
- New external finance will be on appropriately concessional terms.

tries would be eligible for multilateral debt relief. Until the debate on track record is settled, a senior Bank official observed, it is hard to say which countries are eligible. There is also the unresolved issue of the mix of problems which form the basis for eligibility.

On the Bank's list of 36 "severely indebted low-income countries," 28 are African. But only 16 of these are among the 20 countries mentioned for the plan. In this list, seven of the eight countries with "unsustainable" debts are: Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé-Principe, Sudan, Zaire, and Zambia. Nine of the 12 "possibly stressed" are: Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Niger, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

As the track record debate intensified before and during the Washington meetings, Uganda remained the only African country named as a possible early beneficiary. Already the first African country to get Naples terms for bilateral debt stock reduction, Uganda's debt ratios are far from the worst, which is one indication of the unanswered questions about the Bank/Fund plan.

Sub-Saharan Africa's debt profile ($mn)

		1980	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995*
DEBT STOCK	Total Debt	84,049	190,260	194,779	192,781	197,886	212,416	223,298
	of which: long-term debt	58,448	155,088	159,364	154,439	153,372	165,048	174,281
	of which: multilateral	7,558	37,219	40,706	42,457	45,471	50,744	53,749
	bilateral	16,653	66,364	69,784	69,680	69,052	74,473	78,328
DEBT RATIOS	Debt/exports (%)	90.9	225.7	239.4	235.6	251.9	265.7	269.8
	Debt/GNP (%)	30.6	70.8	70.6	69.8	73.2	78.7	74.1
DEBT SERVICE	Total paid	9,000	14,999	13,376	12,843	11,710	11,212	12,207
	Total due	n.a.	25,618	20,999	21,191	21,225	21,776	20,154
	Total arrears**	1,451	27,834	32,653	38,825	48,242	54,279	62,226
	of which: official creditors	513	10,335	12,898	15,975	19,731	22,601	n.a.
FDI	Net foreign direct investment	33	876	1,815	1,882	1,753	2,987	2,187

Source: World Bank, World Debt Tables, 1996 *Preliminary **Combines arrears on principal and interest

Debate over ESAF, concern over IDA

G-7 countries also dismissed an attempt by the IMF to make its participation in debt reduction conditional on their approval of its plan to raise $7.25 bn for its enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF) from 1999 to 2004. In the scenario which Managing Director Michel Camdessus has promoted with little success for over a year, the IMF would sell just under 5 per cent of its 103 mn ounces of gold to raise about $2 bn; bilateral donors would provide $2 bn to enable continued ESAF lending at 0.5 per cent interest, and they would also return to the IMF the funds repaid them from ESAF loans.

Despite Mr. Camdessus' explanation that the gold sale would help diversify the Fund's balance sheet and hardly affect its huge reserves, only Britain and Canada support the plan. Germany is clearly opposed, while the US says it would "carefully consider" it. All major creditors oppose fresh bilateral contributions to ESAF. Citing serious budget constraints in many countries, "including my own," US Treasury Secretary Rubin said the IMF would have to play a primary funding role, "in particular through more efficient use of resources available to it." He also warned against a plan which depends on sizeable bilateral contributions for its viability.

Sharp criticism of the plan has also come from Oxfam, the British non-governmental organization, which said the UK should withdraw support from ESAF unless the IMF itself makes a substantial contribution to multilateral debt reduction. It said refinancing old ESAF loans with new ones on similar terms would do little for debt reduction.

But according to Belgian Deputy Prime Minister Philippe Maystadt, who chaired the 22 April meeting of the IMF's key policy advisory body, the Interim Committee, the IMF's contribution to multilateral debt reduction will have to come from ESAF, so "the financial proposals that were on the table remain on the table." He anticipated the need for "some imaginative combination" of options in order to mobilize timely support for the ESAF funding plan.

The G-24 expressed "serious concerns" over the long-term prospects of the Bank's International Development Association (IDA), Africa's primary source of multilateral soft loans. Up to $22 bn may be available for the three-year cycle of IDA-11 which starts in July. But the G-24 noted that donor pledges are less than those for IDA-9 and 10. The US, for instance, says it will honour its $935 mn pledge to IDA-10, but will contribute nothing to the first year of IDA-11.

But outside the G-24, the nearly $1 bn shortfall in IDA-11 funding was hardly seen as an urgent issue. While noting "with great concern" the difficulties in replenishing IDA, the Development Committee only agreed to make this "a key issue for discussion...in a year's time."

In sum, Africa got little out of these meetings and its marginal status may worsen due to the IMF plans to raise more money by issuing new share quotas. Fund officials said it has been "generally agreed" that quotas be issued according to ability to pay. African countries, however, have little such ability: a vote costs about $145,000. The 48 sub-Saharan countries control less than 5 per cent of votes in the Bank and Fund, which is about a quarter of the US share and less than a sixth of Europe's.

Some African ministers stayed away from the meetings, prompting some Bank and Fund officials to remark privately that Africans have given up on the institutions. Those who came ostensibly for the meetings offered little comment. Excluded from the inner chambers of discussion, African ministers busied themselves with negotiations for Bank and Fund credits.

Even some Bretton Woods officials admit that the debt proposal could have yielded more if Africa were of greater strategic interest to the creditor countries, whose appointees dominate day-to-day decision-making in the Bank and Fund. To illustrate, one pointed to the Bank's announcement in April that it had rescheduled Bosnia's debt over 30 years, even before that country had become a member or begun economic reforms. "When it comes to Africa, things take longer and tend to get more complex," the official said. ■

A new impetus for African development

The Special Initiative aims to improve access to basic education and primary health care

By **Margaret A. Novicki**

Agencies of the UN system have begun devising implementation strategies for the Special Initiative on Africa, a multi-million dollar, decade-long programme to maximize support for African development which was launched by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on 15 March.

The Initiative, which commits the UN agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions to working together in a coordinated and synergistic fashion behind Africa's priorities, is the UN's most significant mobilization of international support for development in one world region.

It represents "a new approach to development cooperation which is goal-driven and which is focused on collaboration among all the donors for particular country-defined objectives," said Mr. James Gustave Speth, Administrator of the UN Development Programme and co-chair of the Special Initiative Steering Committee. The committee met in Nairobi in late April to begin to address implementation and resource mobilization for the Special Initiative's 14 components.

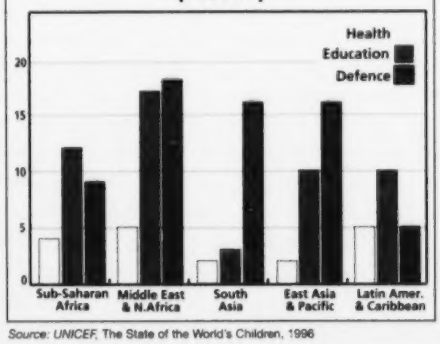
The Initiative devotes the bulk of its resources to expanding basic education and improving health care in Africa. It also focuses on promoting peace and better governance, improving water and food security, increasing the continent's competitiveness in world trade, and making available new information technology.

"All the agencies have worked well together to map out and allocate our tasks for the coming 10-year programme," said Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa and co-chairman of the Steering Committee. "Our guidelines are laid out. We begin this campaign with a clear vision of how it will strengthen the capacity of African societies and economies for real growth," he said.

The Special Initiative will strive to ensure basic education for all children, with a special emphasis on girls.

UNICEF/Nabeta

Government spending (1995 %)



Source: UNICEF, The State of the World's Children, 1996

Give development a chance

The Special Initiative's components are based on four themes reflecting Africa's development priorities as expressed in the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) 1995 Cairo Agenda for Action.

The first theme consists of actions which are required to create a conducive climate for development. In those countries wracked by war, conflict resolution, national reconciliation and peace-building must be addressed first before any discussion of development can take place. To support the peace process in Africa, the Special Initiative will:

- strengthen the OAU's capacity to engage in conflict prevention, management and resolution;
- strengthen selected organs of civil society engaged in peace-building and the promotion of human rights and democracy; and
- promote the use of the mass media, particularly radio broadcasting, to support peace-building and political participation.

At a time when official development assistance (ODA) is on the decline, the Special Initiative seeks to encourage the release of more resources for Africa's development through a combination of action and advocacy involving African and donor countries and institutions and the UN system itself. To assist in mobilizing the continent's internal resources, the Initiative will focus on improving revenue collection and domestic savings and investment. The financial intermediation system will also be strengthened for better resource allocation, and information technology for development will be promoted to improve links between African countries, its subregions and the rest of the world.

The Initiative will also strive to galvanize external support for Africa's economic transition by:

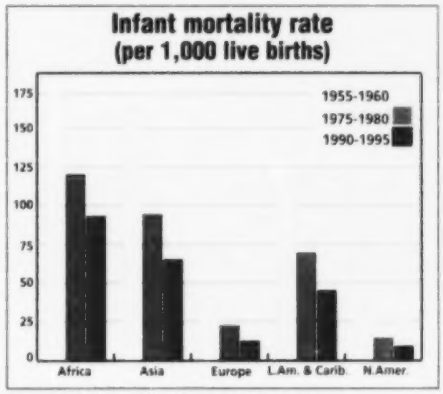
- encouraging multilateral and bilateral creditors to reduce Africa's external debt burden and make it more sustainable; encouraging African countries to manage their debt more effectively; and encouraging the UN system, with the Secretary-General's leadership, to have a more integrated and active strategy on African debt;
- helping to lessen Africa's aid dependency by expanding trade access, diversifying export opportunities, boosting the inflows of foreign direct investment, and increasing the continent's capacity to compete in the international economy; and
- enhancing South-South cooperation and partnerships in trade, finance, production and services, particularly through stronger private sector linkages.

Hope for the coming generation

The major thrust of the Special Initiative, involving its largest resource commitment, is

on greatly increasing the provision of basic education and health care so that African children will have improved opportunities for the future. Accomplishment of these goals will also have a positive impact on the empowerment of women and hence on development through a more manageable population growth rate and enhanced human welfare.

The Special Initiative will conduct a 10-year effort to ensure basic education for all children, with a special emphasis on girls, and literacy and numeracy for women. Evidence has shown that basic education is the best possible development investment, strongly correlated to greater participation in democracy, more productive farmers, better family planning and higher incomes. The World Bank will lead in the financial mobilization of this component, which, at between $12.5 bn and $15.5 bn, is the Initiative's largest.



Source: *UNICEF*, The State of the World's Children, 1996

The Bank and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization have already organized consultations on the education sector with African governments and donors, and the Donor Association for African Education is preparing a proposal on its role in support of the Initiative.

The Initiative will also include a campaign to reform the health sector, which will involve boosting the capacity of Africa's health systems to reduce, on a sustainable basis, the most common causes of morbidity and mortality. The coverage, quality and access to primary health care services will be expanded, specially targeting the most common preventable and/or treatable diseases.

Coordination meetings on the health sector have been convened in Brazzaville, Congo, by the World Health Organization's regional office for Africa, and a preliminary health strategy has been mapped out. WHO has invited the other cooperating agencies in the health sector to devise an implementation strategy.

The Initiative also addresses poverty reduction by the promotion of employment and sustainable livelihoods, with efforts concentrated on the informal sector, which employs about 60 per cent of Africa's labour force, and on environmentally marginal areas.

Strengthening governance

African leaders' efforts to improve governance will be bolstered under the Initiative by supporting Africa's civil service to better manage development, helping build independent judicial systems, supporting the functioning of parliaments and electoral processes, and making public administration more accountable. The Initiative will also seek to strengthen the capacities of civil society to be more active in development and policy-making, including peace-building and conflict resolution.

Urgency on survival

Africa faces a formidable challenge in balancing the interrelated issues of food production, population growth and protection of its fragile environment from further damage. The Initiative places special emphasis on the need to control land degradation and desertification, encourage irrigation, improve soil quality, and support the role of women in food production. It also focuses on providing safe water for drinking and sanitation.

Consultations have begun among the cooperating agencies on defining a strategy and outlining proposals for implementation of the water component, and a framework for action and a workplan will be presented to the Steering Committee. And the working group on food production will soon finalize its implementation strategy.

Resource mobilization

The Initiative's components are of two types: those which require substantial resource mobilization and implementation and those which call primarily for a strengthening and rationalization of existing efforts. The cumulative financial resources required over a 10-year period are estimated at up to $25 bn, most of which will come from a redirection of existing resources in African national budgets and reallocations of existing levels of multilateral and bilateral ODA.

To this end, the Initiative contains three new mechanisms which are designed to help rationalize development assistance to Africa and maximize its impact. First, multilateral and bilateral donors will create goal-oriented regional forums to raise resources for key sectors. Second, African governments will prepare goal-oriented country investment programmes to maximize the impact of resource mobilization. Third, participation in Consultative Group and Roundtable meetings is to be broadened to include non-traditional partners, such as leaders of business and civil society.

The Initiative also recommends other ways of releasing funds for development, including deeper debt relief, an expansion of Africa's trade opportunities, and enhanced South-South cooperation.

This all-encompassing effort to enhance Africa's development possibilities will require strong international support — and an effective partnership with donor countries and institutions — to achieve its goals, say UN agency officials. A one-year mobilization of political support has hence been launched to raise Africa's priority status on the international agenda.

Roger Lemoyne - UNICEF

The Special Initiative will lead a campaign to reform Africa's health sector.

"We will all be making a concerted effort over the coming year through a series of parallel initiatives to elevate the attention [paid to] Africa on the international agenda and to mobilize additional support for Africa and for this Initiative," said Mr. Speth, UNDP Administrator. ■

Special Initiative

from page 1

the Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF); Ms. Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF); and Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA). They were introduced by the event's co-moderators, Mr. Samir Sanbar, Assistant Secretary-General of the UN Department of Public Information, and Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of its Regional Bureau for Africa.

Evan Schneider / UN

The launch of the Special Initiative at UN headquarters in New York: (from left to right) Mr. Samir Sanbar, Assistant Secretary-General of the UN Department of Public Information; Ms. Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF; Mr. James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank; Mr. James Gustave Speth, Administrator of UNDP; Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of UNFPA; Mr. Prabhakar Narvekar, Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund; and Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of its Regional Bureau for Africa.

The Initiative was also launched at the headquarters of UN institutions in Paris, Geneva, Rome, Nairobi, and Vienna, in African capitals including Accra, Dakar, Pretoria and Addis Ababa, and in other cities around the world.

More coherent UN approach

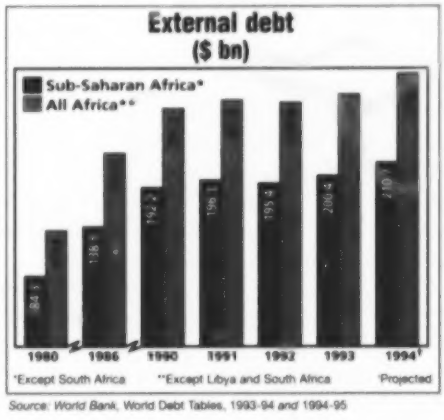
Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali said the Special Initiative would bring "a more coherent and comprehensive approach by the United Nations system to Africa's needs and priorities." Africa has made determined efforts over the past few years to overcome its difficulties, he noted, and these efforts deserve to be supported. "I am not appealing to the international community's generosity, but to its conscience" to give Africa "its due" so that it can become a source of peace and prosperity in the world, Mr. Boutros-Ghali said.

Countering the image of a continent further and further marginalized from the world economy, the Secretary-General said the Special Initiative should reassure Africa that "it is not alone, it is not abandoned, that it remains more than ever under the watchful eyes of the world."

"Now is the time for the United Nations, and the international community as a whole, to stand together with Africa, its leaders, and its people. Now is the time for us to forge a new partnership," Mr. Boutros-Ghali appealed.

With the scarcity of aid resources, it is even more important that "each aid dollar be used to maximum efficiency for poverty reduction," said Mr. Wolfensohn. "The World Bank is fully committed to doing its part."

Picking up on the Bank president's point, UNDP Administrator Speth, who is also co-chair of the Special Initiative Steering Committee, noted that it was fitting that this renewed focus on Africa should begin in 1996, the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. He said that the Initiative "is not a magic solution for Africa's problems," but "a realistic prescription for joint action between Africa and its partners in critically important areas."



Source: *World Bank*, World Debt Tables, 1993-94 *and* 1994-95

The Special Initiative's 14 components are grouped under four themes derived from Africa's own development priorities, most recently affirmed in the Organization of African Unity's (OAU) 1995 Cairo Agenda for Action (see page 8). By pooling the expertise of each of the UN and Bretton Woods agencies, Mr. Speth said, "the entities we represent can achieve far more working together than [we] could hope to achieve working alone."

Each of the Initiative's components has its own implementation schedule and financing context, as well as a lead UN agency or agencies responsible for oversight and mobilization of funding. For UNDP, the major sectoral focus will be good governance — "key to building a robust indigenous civil society" and to "spurring the private sector and attracting much-needed investment," Mr. Speth said.

While the Special Initiative will require significant resources — up to $25 bn over the decade — Mr. Speth said, "In the long run, it will save money. More important, it will save lives and improve livelihoods. Above all it will help move Africa into the mainstream of global development."

The World Bank has pledged to lead in the mobilization of over 85 per cent of the necessary resources. Whereas most of the financing — amounting to $2.5 bn a year, or 20 per cent of current official development assistance to Africa — will come from reallocations of existing resources at the national and international levels, some new monies will also have to be raised.

"More is needed," said Mr. Speth. Hence, he explained, agency heads are joining together to kick off a one-year resource mobilization campaign, as well as an effort to elevate Africa's level of priority on the global agenda.

The IMF Deputy Managing Director, Mr. Narvekar, said that the IMF can help to establish the macroeconomic framework to underpin the implementation of the programmes launched by other members of the UN system

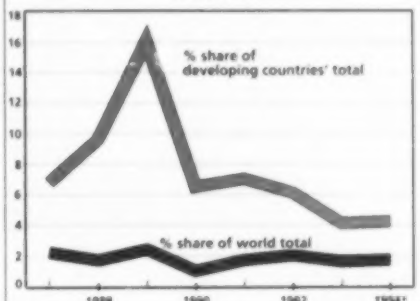
over the life of the Initiative. While Africa's macroeconomic performance has improved in recent years, progress is still too slow "to make major headway toward sustainable growth and achieve a significant reduction in poverty," Mr. Narvekar said.

The Initiative's components were thus chosen on the basis of their potential to make a rapid, durable and significant impact on Africa's development prospects. A major thrust of the Initiative — taking the bulk of its resources — is on increasing the provision of basic education and health care to ensure that Africa's children have vastly improved opportunities for the future.

Africa's children "will hold us all responsible for the outcome," said UNICEF's Ms. Bellamy, who characterized the Initiative as "an elementary act of justice in response to Africa's crisis." UNICEF, for its part, will commit resources to implement the Initiative's priority areas of health care, education, provision of safe water and adequate sanitation, and the rehabilitation of children affected by wars, Ms. Bellamy stated.

Accomplishment of the Initiative's goals in education and health will also help empower women, upon whom Africa's development depends, said Dr. Sadik of UNFPA. She told the launch that the Special Initiative recognizes the need to improve upon provision of basic health services such as reproductive health care, including family planning. Improvements in this area will help lay a solid basis for Africa's future development.

Foreign direct investment flows to Africa



Source: UNCTAD, Foreign Direct Investment in Africa, 1995

Answering the frustrations felt by many in Africa over "unmet promises and unfulfilled commitments," said Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles, "this time optimism may be warranted because of some of the innovative aspects" of the Initiative "which are designed to make the development partnership more effective and resource mobilization more practicable and achievable."

These include goal-oriented regional donor forums to commit support to national investment programmes which address the major development objectives in each country. Consultative Group and Roundtable meetings may also be broadened to include non-traditional participants, such as the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

The international community has a responsibility to help Africa "prevail over poverty and to create the impetus for development," Prime Minister Meles said. But "Africa does not call upon the world to do for it what it should do on its own ... Africa and its people should and must be responsible for the development of the continent."

Roots in African programmes

An important aspect of the effort, affirmed Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa and co-chairman of the Initiative Steering Committee, is that most of the Initiative's resources will be "firmly rooted in national programmes of

Countering Africa's marginalization

The UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa had its genesis in Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's concerns that Africa might be slipping "from the forefront of the development dialogue," Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Assistant Administrator, and Director, Regional Bureau for Africa, of the UN Development Programme (UNDP), told a press briefing at UN headquarters on 14 March.

The Secretary-General shared his concerns about Africa — a continent he characterized as "a test case for international cooperation and development and for the United Nations" — and about declining trends in official development assistance with the heads of all UN organizations gathered in the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in late 1994.

"At that point," said Ms. Johnson Sirleaf, "we were just about midway in the UN-NADAF," the UN New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. UN-NADAF, along with its predecessor, the 1986-90 UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD), are statements of principle on ways to accelerate African development, representing "compacts" between Africa and its partners, the UNDP Assistant Administrator explained.

The Secretary-General then asked Mr. James Gustave Speth, the UNDP Administrator, and Mr. K.Y. Amoako, the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), to work out an agenda to combine the entire UN system behind a "renewed impetus for African development."

The ACC set up a Steering Committee, co-chaired by Mr. Speth and Mr. Amoako, which was organized in five working groups — on water, food security, governance, social and human development and resource mobilization — and was responsible for shaping the Special Initiative's components. Taking into consideration the development priorities identified by African heads of state in the 1995 Cairo Agenda for Action, and the compact with Africa's partners contained in UN-NADAF, the Committee devised a series of programmes for "doing business in a different way" to support Africa, Ms. Johnson Sirleaf said.

"Because one wanted to give programme content to these compacts, this particular Initiative was organized in this way....We see it as bringing an operational orientation to UN-NADAF," Ms. Johnson Sirleaf said.

UNICEF's Deputy Executive Director for External Relations, Mr. Stephen Lewis, said the Special Initiative "is a very serious test of the commitment to the African continent." While there is "a trendy and fashionable cynicism" about such efforts, he said the Initiative holds real promise for success because of the collective involvement of the entire UN system — including the Bretton Woods institutions — and because it identifies specific programmes for action, the resources required for implementation, and the framework for resource mobilization.

"Here you have a programme where the chief international resource mobilizing agency, the World Bank, has said it will raise the [bulk of the] $25 bn over 10 years. That is what gives us the capacity to feel over the next 10 years that this might work," Mr. Lewis said.

Ms. Johnson Sirleaf added, "If there is nothing achieved in this initiative than a better way of doing business by the UN system, which is going to work together and help Africa in a coordinated and comprehensive way, we think that in itself has extreme value."

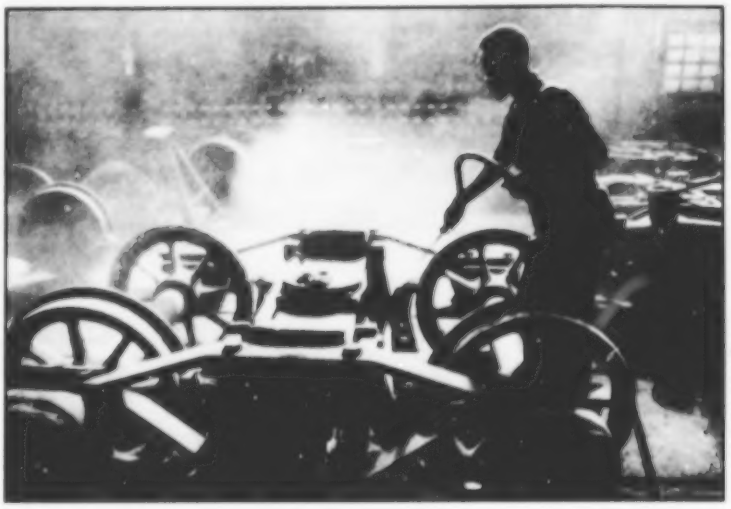
action, locally defined and managed."

"This is the right thing for Africa — at the right time," the ECA Executive Secretary noted, because "the chances of this continent emerging from its development crisis are better now than in many years." Ambassador Vijay Makhan, Assistant Secretary-General of the OAU, said the Initiative comes as "a breath of fresh air in the stifling environment" in which Africa has been struggling to implement reforms "in the face of very difficult national and international conditions," including what seems to be an "Africa fatigue."

The OAU, he said, has been actively involved in Africa's democratization and in conflict prevention, management and resolution, and thus welcomes the proposals in the Initiative to strengthen the organization's capacity in these areas as part of an effort to create a conducive climate for development. The OAU is also fully supportive of the Initiative's efforts towards achieving sustainable development.

Finally, Ambassador Makhan said, the OAU is "in full agreement that the ownership of the Initiative should be vested in each one of our Member States...based on national programmes prepared by our respective countries."

This point was given concrete expression by President Jerry Rawlings of Ghana, who addressed a ceremony in Accra marking the launching of the Special Initiative.



Beyond mobilizing aid resources, the Special Initiative seeks to spur the private sector and attract much-needed investment.

Characterizing the programme as "a major response to the challenges facing us in Africa," President Rawlings said Ghana had already prepared a country strategy document in 1995, outlining the framework for donor assistance with a particular emphasis on UN system cooperation. This document, which enumerates Ghana's sectoral development priorities, will facilitate the implementation of the Special Initiative, he said.

But work on the Initiative is "just beginning," President Rawlings said. "The people of Africa will know it is successful when we see schools where there were no schools before, when we have health services where those services were not adequate before, when households have easy access to safe water, when there are enhanced work opportunities for the younger generation, and when we see donors supporting our plans in innovative ways," he said.

President Abdou Diouf of Senegal concluded his remarks at a Dakar launching ceremony in a similar vein, imploring "our friends within the UN" to do their utmost so that the Special Initiative is "not only yet another initiative, but the start of a new era in multilateral cooperation and a source of inspiration for a new partnership in development." ■

A new partnership for the World Bank

Characterizing the Special Initiative on Africa as intelligent, focused, comprehensive in its approach and coherent, Mr. James Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, told the audience at the launching ceremony at UN headquarters on 15 March that the Initiative is "very easy for us to support."

At a press conference immediately following the ceremony, Mr. Wolfensohn noted that this is the first time the Bank has been part of a combined initiative of this type. "The reason I am enthusiastic to be part of it is because this is the first time we have brought together in a coordinated effort a real focus on Africa and I believe it is worth it to spend existing money better," he said.

Noting that the "fragmented approach of donors" has reduced their effectiveness, he said the Initiative establishes "a simple machinery of coordination and synergy among development agencies that greatly increases the ability of each of us to achieve our goals."

Mr. Wolfensohn said the Bank will participate in all areas covered by the Initiative, with particular responsibility for mobilizing resources for its two major components: basic education and health reform, which will require up to 85 per cent of the $25 bn the Initiative is projected to cost. The Bank will also sponsor forums for mobilizing resources in other areas.

The Special Initiative "allows us to try and go out and arrest" the decline in official development assistance (ODA), the World Bank president said. But he warned, "Money has not historically been the problem." The issue is rather "how we spend the money...and do we do it efficiently."

Mr. Wolfensohn said that while ODA is under pressure, opportunities exist in the private sector, which in terms of development investment, is roughly three and one-half times official flows — about $170 bn a year, against $50 bn worldwide. As of now, very little of that amount goes to Africa. "So...we need to do...what we are doing better, and to make sure that we draw a line and hopefully increase concessional assistance," he said.

Acknowledging that for some countries there is a negative flow of resources as a consequence of the need to service debt incurred in the past, Mr. Wolfensohn pledged there would be a joint proposal by the IMF and the Bank presented at the April meeting of the Interim and Development Committees addressing the question of the highly indebted countries. This represents "a recognition by the multilateral system that there is an issue that needs to be addressed," he said.

President of the World Bank for a little over nine months as of March, Mr. Wolfensohn said he had "a great sense of modesty" about the notion of development. Having visited Africa, he found "the real answers" lie with Africa and Africans, notwithstanding all the expertise found at the Bank. Therefore, he was pleased that the Special Initiative is designed to be supportive of and a "true partnership" with African leadership.

Signs of recovery

from page 1

mass of poorly performing economies," and its capacity for real and sustained growth is being increasingly realized, the ECA report said. The report also noted that only three countries had negative growth in 1995 compared to 14 in 1994, while eight exceeded 6 per cent growth compared to only two in 1994. But the average per capita income of Africans still fell by 0.6 per cent due to the continent's 2.9 per cent population growth rate, even though GDP growth in 19 countries exceeded that figure. The social sector also remained "under great pressure" in 1995, the ECA said, partly due to the "severe" cuts in real spending on education, health and social welfare. The report noted that unemployment averages 20 per cent in Africa's cities and is growing at 10 per cent a year.

If Africa enjoys good weather, strong performance in key sectors, and political and macroeconomic stability, the ECA projects 2.9 per cent GDP growth in 1996. But growth in Africa's least developed countries could drop from 2.4 per cent in 1995 to 1.5 per cent due to current problems in Burundi, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Zaire. "Despite the fundamental and hopefully irreversible domestic reforms," the report added, Africa's medium-term prospects continue to be threatened by "daunting" external factors beyond its control, including the debt burden. Africa must pursue intensive diversification, extensive domestic resource mobilization and modernization of production structures, the ECA declared.

Little prospect for poverty reduction

Although generally more optimistic, the World Bank and IMF both echoed the ECA's continuing concern over Africa's structural problems. The Bank's 1996 edition of *Global Economic Prospects and the Developing Countries* said Africa's GDP growth would slow to 3.7 per cent in 1996 and predicted 3.5-4 per cent growth in sub-Saharan Africa over the next decade. However, the low projected rates of per capita income growth left only "modest" prospects for poverty reduction, the Bank said.

The IMF's latest *World Economic Outlook* projected strong growth of 5.3 per cent for Africa in 1996, but noted that many countries had tackled widening fiscal deficits by cutting capital spending to levels lower than a decade ago. Another "politically easier" path had been the widespread practice of "allowing real wages in the public sector to be eroded by keeping nominal wage levels unchanged while prices are rising." Average consumer prices in Africa rose 37.2 per cent in 1993 and 60.7 per cent in 1994, said the IMF's *International Financial Statistics*, but the inflation rate slowed to 43.4 per cent in 1995, the ECA reported. Most African economies remained fragile, with many "still heavily dependent on grants to finance large fiscal imbalances," the IMF added.

Africa's debt-service payments rose from $22 bn in 1994 to $33 bn in 1995, equivalent to 31 per cent of export revenue.

Turning to agriculture, the ECA said total output stagnated and value added fell from 4.2 per cent in 1994 to 1.5 per cent in 1995, notably due to drought in 10 North, Eastern and Central African countries as well as civil strife. Africa has 44 of the 88 low-income, food-deficit countries listed by the Food and Agriculture Organization, and although sub-Saharan food production grew an average 2.5 per cent in 1990-95, this was 0.5 per cent lower than population growth. Worse still, sub-Saharan food production fell by 1.4 per cent in 1995, with cereals output down by 11.9 per cent.

While good rainfall so far this year would bring relief to drought-hit areas and boost Africa's agricultural output by 3 per cent, the ECA said per capita food production may drop further. Food prices are already 13.5 per cent higher in the first quarter of 1996 than in the same period last year.

Export revenue grew 11.1 per cent last year (from 4.9 per cent in 1994), mainly due to better prices for oil, which provides nearly 60 per cent of Africa's foreign earnings, and "fortuitous increases" in other primary commodity prices. This helped improve terms of trade by 1.5 per cent, up from 1.2 per cent in 1994, but both figures were still below the 1990 base year. Africa's import costs, however, rose 12.8 per cent (up from 7.3 per cent in 1994), with the balance of payments deficit widening from $10 bn to $16 bn and from 10.7 to 14.4 per cent of exports.

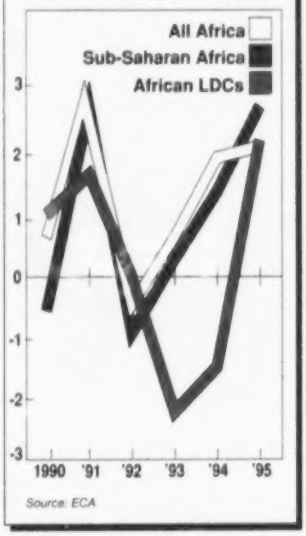
Commodity price boom nearly over

Confirming the sharp slowdown in the commodity boom, cocoa prices gained only 2.6 per cent in 1995 against 25.7 per cent in 1994, while coffee rose 5.8 per cent against 123.9 per cent in 1994, the ECA said. "Indeed, far from forecasting further buoyancy, the World Bank (which in the past has tended towards over-optimism) predicts real commodity price decreases of 1.1 per cent a year over the next 10 years," the UK's Overseas Development Institute has observed. Concerns about trade promotion grew as Africa's share of the European Union market (which takes 70 per cent of Africa's exports) slipped further from 6.3 per cent in 1980 to 3.3 per cent in 1992 and 2.8 per cent in 1995. Africa's 2.2 per cent share of world trade was also under half the 1980 level.

With Africa's exports to the US facing "considerably higher" freight costs than on similar goods from other countries, the World Bank said the charges "conceal very high rates of effective protection for processed goods." Sub-Saharan net freight and insurance payments in fiscal 1991 were 15 per cent of total exports compared to 5.8 per cent for all developing countries, and this trend is on the increase, the Bank said. This put Africa at an important cost disadvantage with competitors and "significantly reduces the incentive for new investment" in local processing for export.

The Bank listed terms of trade shocks and civil strife as being among the major causal factors in the loss of creditworthiness and falling ratios of foreign direct investment (FDI) to GDP which occurred in 37 developing countries over the past decade, 20 of them sub-Saharan. Noting the 27 per cent downturn in sub-Saharan net FDI in 1995, the ECA called for renewed efforts to increase the mobilization of domestic resources and improve the investment climate, as well as more external support to reduce the debt overhang. According to IMF figures, Africa paid $33 bn in debt service last year compared to $22 bn in 1994. ■

Africa's GDP growth
(% annual change; 1990 prices)



Source: ECA

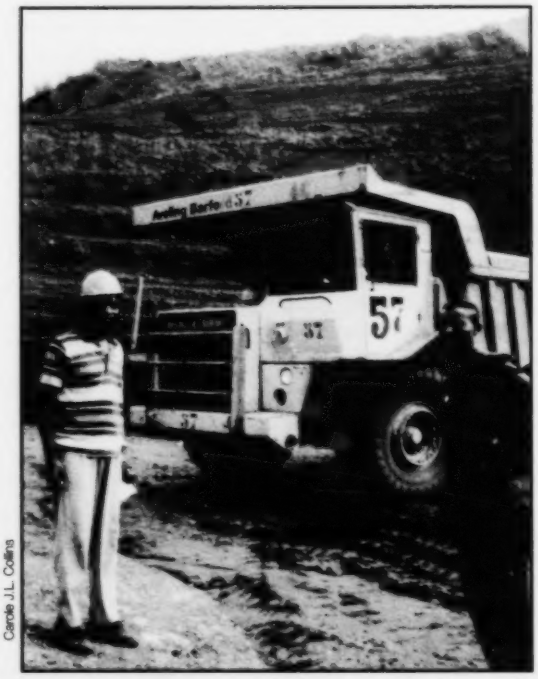
Zaire's economic crisis deepens

But dynamic grassroots development groups emerge

By **Carole J.L. Collins**
Kinshasa

More than most other African countries, Zaire today faces the stark reality of a collapsing economy, deepening poverty, growing hunger, pervasive mismanagement and rising ethnic tensions. These difficulties have been aggravated by a six-year political stalemate between supporters and opponents of President Mobutu Sese Seko which has delayed the process of democratization, as well as by the sudden arrival in 1994 of more than 1.4 million refugees from neighbouring Rwanda.

The complexity of Zaire's current crisis has led to mixed international responses to the situation in this vast, resource-rich and strategically located nation which, with 45 million people, is the third most populous in sub-Saharan Africa. It has also forced Zairians to explore new strategies and grassroots initiatives for survival. A visit to five of Zaire's provinces in late 1995 found signs that an emerging civil society — a lively mix of grassroots development, women's and human rights groups — is beginning to better people's lives and nurture a new politics of accountability.



Carole J.L. Collins

Open pit diamond mining in Mbuji-Mayi: diamond production is one of the few economic sectors that has continued to prosper, although to a significant extent, outside official structures.

An unraveling economy

To visit Zaire is to enter a world where formal economic activity is scarce and where much public sanitation, transport and communications infrastructure has virtually ceased to exist. All of Zaire's economic data is to be treated with caution — the statistics are so unreliable that the World Bank stopped listing the country in its annual *World Development Report* after 1993. Yet the magnitude of the crisis is evident, not least in the plunging exchange rate of the currency — called the zaire — and skyrocketing inflation rates.

Zaire's economy has shrunk more than 40 per cent since 1988 (16 per cent during 1993 alone), and its 1995 growth rate was estimated at -0.6 per cent, up from an abysmal -7.2 per cent in 1994. Between 1989 and 1993, recorded exports of goods and services fell by more than half, and imports by nearly three-quarters. In 1993, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) — a modest $117 — was 65 per cent lower than in 1958, just prior to independence, although Zaire's population tripled during that same period.

This low per capita GDP makes Zaire the fourth poorest country in the world, although it boasts some of the world's largest deposits of diamonds, cobalt and copper, the world's second largest rain forest, and some of Africa's most fertile farmland.

From independence, Zaire's economy has been beset by problems ranging from a shortage of skilled managers to widespread misappropriation of state funds. Both problems became more acute in the late 1960s and early 1970s, after some foreign-owned enterprises were nationalized and many more were transferred to local private owners under a programme called "Zairianization." In the same period, Zaire borrowed heavily to fund prestige projects. Later in the 1970s, wild fluctuations in world commodity prices for Zaire's principal exports added to the country's financial problems.

Remarkable amounts of public sector funds have "gone missing" in the last three decades — one International Monetary Fund (IMF) official documented $150 mn in diversions from a state minerals marketing agency over two years. Such losses prevented major government-owned companies — notably the giant copper/cobalt parastatal Gecamines (now producing at only 10 per cent of mid-1980s levels) and the diamond firm MIBA — from modernizing or expanding production. Corruption charges fueled public tensions, especially towards a group of wealthy Zairians, most of them allies of the president, alleged by a 1992 report of an opposition-dominated parliamentary commission to have used their positions to divert resources.

Thanks to highly favourable climatic and soil conditions, increases in food production were able to match Zaire's 3 per cent annual population growth until the late 1980s. But because of unsuitable pricing policies, the deterioration of the road system (three-quarters of which may now be impassable) and the steep drop in purchasing power in urban areas, where nearly 30 per cent of Zairians now live, average annual growth in food production declined to under 2 per cent between 1988 and 1992.

Failure of reform

During 1983-86, the Zairian government publicly embraced economic stabilization and adjustment programmes supported by the World Bank and IMF. However, figures compiled by the World Bank revealed substantial budgetary irregularities even during this period of official support for reform. Social services were espe-

cially hard hit by official and unofficial spending cuts. By the early 1980s, reports by non-governmental organizations suggested that living standards were beginning to decline, and by 1986 official statistics were documenting a significant downturn in both urban living standards and macroeconomic performance.

From 1986 to 1989, the government alternated between support for and rejection of structural adjustment. In 1991 the IMF had declared Zaire ineligible for loans (and suspended its voting rights in June 1994) due to its accumulation of over $6 bn in arrears. The World Bank and African Development Bank have also declared the country ineligible for further lending. Only in 1995 did Zaire begin repayments ($22.6 mn worth) on its foreign debt, which stood at $12.3 bn in 1994.

Since 1990, political conflict and civil strife have accelerated Zaire's decline. The World Bank estimated that the destruction of capital assets by rioting and looting was equivalent to one-quarter of total GDP.

With the virtual abandonment of economic reform, fiscal policy spun out of control. Zaire's tax base, which stood at around 10-11 per cent of GDP in the 1980s, fell to just 3 per cent in 1992 and 1993, as most mines, manufacturing firms and plantations ceased paying taxes. Yet government spending surged, to a point where government outlays were five times greater than receipts, and obligations 10 times higher.

Since 1990, political conflict and civil strife — particularly the pillage of several cities by unpaid soldiers in 1991 and again in 1993 — have accelerated Zaire's decline. The World Bank estimated that the destruction of capital assets by rioting and looting was equivalent to one-quarter of total GDP.

Quantifying the full scope of Zaire's economic decay is difficult, however, since much economic activity has shifted to the informal sector. The dynamism of Zaire's informal economy, where both private entrepreneurship and small-scale rural and urban production have proliferated in recent years, has to some extent softened the impact of the crisis in the formal economy.

Bitter realities of daily life

Corruption has virtually bankrupted Zaire's public sector and — along with IMF-backed austerity measures introduced since 1983 to cut public expenditures — crippled the government's ability to provide basic public services, from repairing roads to running schools and hospitals.

Health and education have been particularly hard hit. The budget share for health dropped from 2.4 per cent in 1972 to 0.7 per cent in 1990, while the share for education fell from 15.1 per cent to 1.4 per cent over the same period. In 1986 the government covered only 5 per cent of recurrent health costs, compared to 50 per cent or more in most sub-Saharan countries. World Bank figures indicate primary school enrolment fell to 76 per cent in 1990 (from 98 per cent in 1980), and secondary school enrolment to 23 per cent (from 35 per cent in 1980). In 1990, the Bank urged the government to spend more on social programmes and less on security and political activities. Hunger increased, even in the cities, and in July 1993 the UN initiated a feeding programme in the country's capital, Kinshasa, where over 9 per cent of children were malnourished.

Annual inflation, which stood at about 20 per cent in 1989, skyrocketed to over 6,000 per cent by 1994, primarily due to the practice of printing money to cover government budget deficits. A recent study by the London-based Economist Intelligence Unit notes that "the average Zairian [was] about 63 per cent poorer in 1994 than in 1965," the year Mobutu Sese Seko became president.

Today the government can rarely afford to pay its own workers. Many of Zaire's 600,000 civil servants must work additional jobs to replace their erratically paid or stolen wages — or extort money in return for their services. Close to 80 per cent of all Zairians now rely on the underground economy or smuggling — the only dynamic and growing sectors of Zaire's economy — to survive.

Signs of the economic crisis — and the desperate and creative ways Zairians are finding to survive — are as ubiquitous as the street kids who weave through Kinshasa's busy traffic, hawking everything from lingerie and radios to hairbrushes and the odd spare part. Many neighbourhoods are littered with piles of rotting garbage and backed-up sewers. Out in central Kasai province, most of bustling Mbuji-Mayi — home to over half a million people — lacks electricity, and many roads become virtual riverbeds when it rains. Enterprising young men frequently stop drivers to demand a "toll" for filling in gullies and potholes on a stretch of road.

The national postal system is all but non-existent. Most cities lack working telephones, and few people can afford expensive cellular phones or two-way radios. "Kinshasa is as far as Europe to us," a development worker from the eastern town of Goma said, recounting the difficulties of communicating with both.

"The situation in which people now live is worse than that of a war," Bruno Lokuta Lyengo, vice-president of the Zairian human rights group Voix des Sans Voix (Voice of the Voiceless), told *Africa Recovery*. "People are dying of famine, of malaria, and diseases which we once eradicated have now re-emerged."

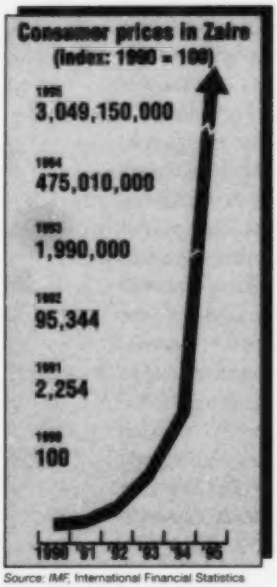
Zaire: Indicators, 1994

SOCIAL	
Population (mn)	42.6
Average annual growth (%)	3.2
Urban (%)	29
Life expectancy (years)	52
Infant mortality (per 1,000 live births)	120
Access to health services (%)	26
HDI ranking (1995)	143*
Public expenditure on:	
Health (% of GDP; 1990)	0.8
Education (% of GNP; 1990)	0.9
Defence (% of GDP; 1992)	2.9
ECONOMIC	
GDP per capita ($; 1993)	117
Real GDP growth (annual average 1990-94)	-8.9
EXPORTS	
Coffee ($mn)	432
as per cent of total exports	34.9
Diamonds ($ mn)	432
as per cent of total exports	34.9
Copper ($ mn)	152
as per cent of total exports	12.3
DEBT	
Total external debt ($ bn)	12.3

* UNDP Human Development Index, ranking among 174 countries

Sources: *UNICEF*, State of the World's Children Report 1996; *UNDP*, Human Development Report 1995; *UNFPA*, The State of World Population 1993; *Economist Intelligence Unit*, Zaire Country Profile, 1995-96; *World Bank*, World Debt Tables 1995.

Wages are often so low that many families cannot even afford to bury their dead, Mr. Lokuta noted. Recovering patients are often held hostage in hospitals, sometimes for months, until they can pay their bills. Human rights and church groups must even provide food for many prisoners who would otherwise starve.



Source: IMF, International Financial Statistics

Members of elite military units usually fare better, some earning close to $300 a month — and actually receiving it. But the local gendarmerie usually does not and is often blamed for stealing from local communities. Poverty among the military moved local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Lubumbashi, capital of Shaba province, to launch an innovative programme: helping local army brigade members grow food, both to eat and to sell, in hope that they would become less inclined to rob civilians.

Mining: the economic milk cow

Mining has historically dominated Zaire's export sector. But civil strife, lack of foreign exchange and other factors have reduced mining production — and its share of exports. Copper production dropped 90 per cent between 1990 and 1994, and 1994 cobalt production is only about a third of what it was in 1990. By 1994, the value of Zaire's coffee exports (boosted by exceptionally high world prices) matched the value of its top export revenue generator, diamonds.

Old tires and gunny sacks of sand may fill gaping holes in the streets of Mbuji-Mayi, but diamonds have turned the crumbling city into a boomtown, its tiny airport bustling with the arrivals of Belgian, Israeli, Lebanese, South African and other international diamond traders. Plucked from nearby alluvial riverbeds, Mbuji-Mayi's diamonds have found ready markets in Johannesburg, Antwerp and beyond. They have also provided Zaire with vital scarce foreign exchange ($432 mn in 1994, or 34.9 per cent of the value of all Zaire's main exports in 1994, up from 10-12 per cent during the 1980s).

Mbuji-Mayi's diamond wealth is both a blessing and a curse to local development, say local NGOs. It provides ready income for the families of freelance diamond miners, and steady jobs for the almost 5,000 Zairians employed by the Société minière de Bakwanga (MIBA), which is 80 per cent government-owned and is the world's second largest producer of industrial diamonds.

But diamonds have enticed public and private investment away from other needed economic activities and local services, already overstretched by the arrival since 1993 of almost 800,000 *refoulés*, people forced to flee ethnic violence in Shaba province to the south. More and more students are quitting school to take up artisanal mining, a local development worker noted, eager to pursue its promise of quick wealth despite the risk of collapsing riverbanks.

MIBA has turned Mbuji-Mayi into a virtual company town. The main builder of the few paved roads, it is also a major provider of education and health care and the chief funder of the city's water works, electricity grid and a new university, in a region where most government functions long ago collapsed.

Competing with MIBA are 16 licensed *comptoirs*, or diamond syndicates, which buy up most of the region's highest-quality diamonds. As MIBA production has dwindled, the *comptoirs*' has grown. Both MIBA and the *comptoirs* compete with a third group: diamond smugglers.

The *comptoirs* demonstrated their considerable clout last October, after Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo tried to bring "backdoor" hard currency deals — especially in diamonds — under central bank control. The bank began meeting with major importers, diamond dealers and commercial banks to set the zaire's exchange rate by 9 a.m. each day. But a new requirement that dealers make all diamond purchases in zaires, not dollars, and deposit half their foreign currency earnings in the central bank met intense resistance. After dealers threatened to take their goods to South Africa or Angola and official purchases dropped by some 70 per cent, the government abruptly rescinded the new rules.

Political impasse at home and abroad

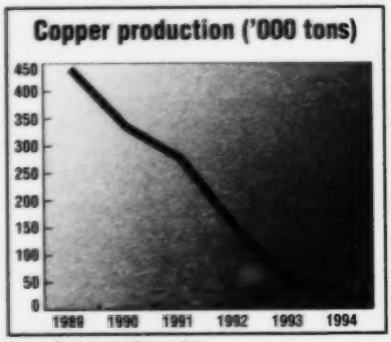
In the spring of 1990, public protests over corruption, human rights abuses and lack of democracy — in what had until then been a one-party political system — pressured President Mobutu to agree to multi-party democracy and free elections. In 1990-91, major donors cut off aid and restricted visas for Mr. Mobutu and his closest colleagues to protest his refusal to relinquish control over the central bank and security forces and to enable concrete planning for elections to proceed. Six years later, Zairians have yet to vote.

Carole J.L. Collins

Primary school in Kinshasa, run by AdeCom, an NGO.

Democratic forces largely failed to maintain their momentum since forming the Sovereign National Conference (predecessor to today's transitional parliament) in mid-1990, in large part due to

the proliferation of political parties (over 300 and rising) and the manipulation of regional, ethnic and personal rivalries. By 1993 and early 1994, Zaire had two rival parliaments and constitutions, two prime ministers and two currencies, with the political struggle illustrated by a tussle for control of the central bank.



Source: Economist Intelligence Unit

But Zaire's role as involuntary host to over a million Rwandan refugees significantly altered the situation. In addition to reinforcing the government's position in eastern Zaire (a region known for its opposition sentiments), the refugee crisis forced donors to deal openly with the government and allowed Mr. Mobutu to regain diplomatic clout after years of isolation.

Diplomatic efforts initiated by the UN helped both camps reach a compromise solution, under which Mr. Kengo wa Dondo, a former cabinet minister and close associate of the President, became Prime Minister in July 1994. But further disagreements over who should serve on a national commission to prepare elections were only resolved in late 1995. In early 1996, Mr. Kengo began soliciting funds from the UN Development Programme and bilateral donors for elections planned for 1997.

Civil society responds

Despite economic chaos and the Kinshasa-centred and largely stalemated political process, a dynamic civil society has emerged, including a lively network of NGOs, many reliant on churches for funding and logistical support.

In the early 1990s, a National Council of NGOs for Development (CNONGD), based on regional councils grouping local NGOs, was set up with headquarters in Kinshasa. It recently launched an effort to develop a national strategy for civic education, especially outside Kinshasa, in advance of the 1997 elections. Dutch consultants are helping CNONGD assess the feasibility of establishing a network of provincial radio stations for development and civic education.

Just who constitutes "civil society" is not always clear. Several pro-Mobutu politicians have reportedly begun to sponsor their own NGOs, and one provincial governor recently tried to hold a meeting of "civil society" groups, one Zairian lawyer told *Africa Recovery*, in hope of cashing in on NGOs' greater popular legitimacy, while spreading confusion about who represents the NGO community. In August 1995, a rival to CNONGD, the Confederation of NGOs for Development of Zaire, was launched, led by a former head of the largely pro-Mobutu National Workers' Union of Zaire.

Despite difficult conditions, several NGOs and small entrepreneurs have achieved impressive successes. AdeCom, a Kinshasa-based NGO set up eight years ago, runs two primary schools and recently opened a new community centre to service a network of market-gardening and other projects. Local airlines like Express City, Shabair and TMK provide comfortable, prompt and reliable daily flights to cities and towns across this vast country.

Local NGOs have criticized donor decisions to suspend aid to Zaire. "It's the poor people who suffer from such cutbacks," argues José Ndjemoto Motong'isongo, an opposition Member of Parliament who runs the Zairian Association for the Defence of Human Rights.

Many Zairians believe democracy's greatest potential may lie in facilitating more accountable local governance structures and development initiatives. In the western Kasai city of Kananga, over a million people lack electricity despite living within a few kilometres of the Inga-Shaba power grid that services the Gecamines copper mining complex hundreds of miles to the south. Fearing direct linkage to Inga-Shaba would make them dependent on the good will of Kinshasa politicians, local residents have raised an initial $2 mn to build their own hydroelectric dam and are soliciting construction bids from foreign companies. ■

UN promotes political reconciliation in Zaire

The United Nations has undertaken two unusual roles in its efforts to help Zaire deal with its chronic political and economic crisis. One has been as a domestic political mediator. Since 1991, Zaire's political opposition had urged UN involvement to help resolve the political stalemate between themselves and supporters of President Mobutu. After social and economic conditions significantly worsened from 1992 on, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in May 1993 authorized a mission to Zaire to assess emergency needs.

In July 1993, he also appointed former Algerian foreign minister Lakhdar Brahimi as UN special envoy to Zaire, tasked with helping resolve Zaire's political impasse. Mr. Brahimi's subsequent visits and talks with all sides in late 1993 and 1994 — which he characterized as being "in the framework of preventive diplomacy" — helped persuade both sides to adopt a compromise, merging the two rival constitutions and parliaments. As a result, in mid-1994, a new transitional parliament elected Mr. Kengo wa Dondo, a longtime colleague of President Mobutu, as prime minister.

The UN has also taken on the role of human rights advocate. In March 1993, the UN Commission on Human Rights abandoned confidential inquiries for public discussion of rights abuses in Zaire and appointed Chilean envoy Roberto Garreton as the first UN special rapporteur on human rights there. In his most recent report, issued on 19 January 1996, Mr. Garreton said he was "disheartened" by the lack of progress in controlling Zaire's security apparatus, limiting President Mobutu's powers, halting all torture and maltreatment inside Zaire's prisons, publicizing the new electoral law and strengthening the judiciary's power and independence from political interference.

UN agencies carry out many other activities in Zaire. UNDP organizes monthly meetings of embassy staff, UN agencies and international NGOs to coordinate emergency relief efforts. In late 1993, the UN's Department of Humanitarian Affairs launched a $84.2 mn emergency aid appeal for Zaire to assist those displaced by ethnic conflict. Last year, UNICEF-Zaire, UNDP and the World Health Organization collaborated with Zaire's Ministry of Planning and National Reconstruction in a major national study of the situation of mothers and children. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme continue to assist Rwandan and Burundian refugees in eastern Zaire, as does the Secretary-General in his efforts to resolve the Rwanda and Burundi crises (see pages 18-20).

— C.C.

Refugee crisis around the Great Lakes

Local leaders, UN and donors seek solutions to continued insecurity in the region

By **Carole J.L. Collins**

Two years after genocide swept through Rwanda, political agitation and mistrust between majority Hutu and minority Tutsi populations in both Rwanda and Burundi has continued to slow the return of refugees and internally displaced people. It has helped maintain the Great Lakes region as the site of Africa's largest refugee crisis.

As of March, over 1.7 million Rwandan and more than 200,000 Burundian refugees were still living outside their homelands (see table), while up to a half-million Burundians were displaced within their country. Globally, only Afghanistan surpassed Rwanda last year in the number of refugees and displaced.

Internal conflicts in Zaire, Sudan and Angola have also added to the region's burden of refugees and displaced. In Zaire, over 1 million people fled from its southern Shaba province to the Kasai region after political tensions ignited ethnic clashes in 1993. In eastern Zaire, armed Rwandan refugees from Hutu military units implicated in the 1994 genocide joined their Zairian ethnic kin in attacking local Hunde villagers north of Goma, forcing over 150,000 mostly Hunde Zairians to flee their land. In Sudan, fighting between the Khartoum government and southern Sudanese insurgent groups has forced 320,000 Sudanese into exile in Uganda and 112,000 in Zaire. And nearly 200,000 Angolans fled to Zaire seeking to escape fighting in their country.

Howard Davis / UNICEF

Rwandan refugees in Tanzania: more than 1.7 million Rwandans are living outside their homeland, and up to 700,000 Burundians are refugees or displaced.

Resistance to repatriation

Fearing an uncertain future and possible prosecution for war crimes if they return home, most "new caseload" Rwandan refugees (those who fled after the April 1994 genocide) have resisted repatriation, despite mounting pressures from the Tanzanian, Zairian and Burundian governments. Many have been swayed by propaganda and intimidation by former Rwandan army and militia officers. Of the 240,388 Rwandan refugees who returned home from neighbouring countries during 1995, about 60 per cent were "old caseload" refugees (mostly Tutsi) who had left between 1959 and 1963.

Tanzania officially closed its borders to new refugees a year ago, although it allowed roughly 20,000 Burundians to enter in January 1996 following renewed fighting in northern Burundi. After a December accord between the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the government, Zairian troops in February briefly encircled two Rwandan refugee camps, hoping that restrictions on movement and commercial activities and a cutback on relief activities to only the most basic services would induce more voluntary repatriations. But to little effect: only 8,065 "new caseload" Rwandans voluntarily returned home between January and April.

Five presidents meet

The presidents of Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire have met twice — in Cairo in November and Tunis in mid-March — under

Zairians bear brunt of refugee burden

Ever since a massive flow of Rwandan refugees poured into Zaire in July 1994, eastern Zaire has experienced an economic, environmental, public health and political nightmare. Barely two years later, the continued refugee presence has severely aggravated long-simmering ethnic tensions among Zairians, generating new refugee flows into Rwanda. Yet the international community has focused little attention and few resources on compensating local communities for the costs of hosting so many refugees.

Local unemployment has jumped because Rwandan refugees, who receive free food rations, can afford to work for less. Prices of food, clothing and other basic goods rose suddenly, making life difficult for local residents on fixed wages. Epidemics of cholera and other diseases brought by the refugees have claimed the lives of many Zairians. Towns and countryside have been steadily stripped of trees as refugees search for firewood. (At a January meeting in Geneva, UNHCR and UNDP asked donors for $70.5 mn to help repair damage to the environment and infrastructure in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi caused by refugees.)

When the refugees arrived, the border town of Goma grew from 20,000 to a quarter-million people overnight. Local Zairian churches and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were the first on the scene. Some brought food and water to the border and suggested places refugees could stay. Others informed arriving refugees of the local exchange rate and the price of a cow so they would not be cheated by local profiteers. Still others helped bury the thousands of refugees who died on city streets and rural roads. One Zairian development NGO near Bukavu's airport, ADI-KIVU, now hosts its "own" refugee camp of almost 7,000 people, most of them family and friends of Rwandan NGO representatives met at previous regional conferences.

Soon, over 170 international NGOs flocked to the region. Preoccupied with the urgent needs of arriving refugees, they largely neglected those of local residents. They also ignored the expertise of local Zairian organizations, opting to set up parallel operations with mostly foreign staff. Unable to match the salaries paid by international agencies, gov-

the auspices of the US-based Carter Centre and the chairmanship of former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, to explore short-term responses and long-term solutions to the regional crisis. But political and military collaboration between kindred communities across the region is heightening tensions within countries and generating new refugee flows. In the absence of an overall political settlement — particularly one which counters reciprocal fear and distrust by bringing all perpetrators of violence and genocide to justice — refugees are increasingly exchanging one haven for another rather than going home, while host countries become increasingly concerned about their continued presence.

In the absence of an overall political settlement, refugees are increasingly exchanging one haven for another rather than going home.

Some forces in the region are abetting the insecurity. Cross-border raids into Rwanda by Hutu infiltrators are taking an increasing human toll, strengthening the government view that some refugees are a security threat. An April report by the UK-based African Rights organization detailed recent attempts by these infiltrators and others to kill witnesses to the 1994 genocide in an effort to obstruct the trials of alleged perpetrators in Rwandan courts or before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, which is to hold its first trial in May. In late March, the UN International Commission of Inquiry, set up last September to investigate the illegal training and rearmament of exiled Rwandan forces, accused Zaire of aiding or ignoring illegal arms flows, obstructing its work and giving misleading statements on the issue. The government denied the charges.

The number of Burundian refugees in the region, which swelled to 600,000 following the October 1993 assassination of Burundi's first democratically elected Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, had dropped to some 200,000 by end-February. But the spread of violence in Burundi (now claiming 1,500-3,000 lives monthly) and increased attacks on relief workers have generated new flows of Burundian refugees to Zaire and Tanzania. Between 1 April and 11 May, 20,000 people fled to Uvira in eastern Zaire alone, most since 29 April when heavy fighting broke out in Burundi. These have been joined by Rwandan Hutu refugees fleeing recent attacks by Burundian government soldiers on their camps in northern Burundi. UNHCR estimates the refugee influx into Uvira may reach 50,000 by the end of May.

Slow donor response

While the number of refugees in the region has remained high, both UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP) are facing great difficulty raising funds to meet refugee needs. Last year, WFP fed more than 3 million Rwandan and Burundian refugees and displaced people at an estimated cost of $1 mn a day. On 5 February, it appealed for $155 mn to continue assisting some 2.4 million Rwandan and Burundian refugees, returnees and displaced persons. WFP is placing new emphasis on helping returnees to repair economic and environmental damage, through distributing food packages at transit centers and spending $7.9 mn to rebuild roads, ports and railways in Burundi, Zaire, Uganda and Tanzania to ensure food deliveries. While the US has pledged 100,000 tons towards the total WFP regional programme requirement of 358,000 tons, other donors have yet to commit themselves.

In December, UNHCR similarly appealed for $288.4 mn for its 1996 Special Burundi-Rwanda Operation. But by 23 April, it had received pledges for only $83 mn ($30 mn of that from the US), barely a quarter of what it requested, forcing a curtailment of field office activities in the region.

The shortage of funds is also affecting other efforts to reduce tensions or help resolve conflicts. Citing a scarcity of resources, the Organization of African Unity has extended its Observer Mission in Burundi to only 23 July. In

RWANDAN REFUGEES IN:	
Uganda	4,000
Burundi	90,636
Tanzania	537,309
Zaire	1,088,437
Total Rwandan refugees	**1,720,352**

BURUNDI REFUGEES IN:	
Rwanda	3,260
Tanzania	94,618
Zaire	109,119
Total Burundi refugees	**206,997**

Note: Figures are as of 8 May 1996.
Source: UN High Commissioner for Refugees

eral local NGOs bitterly watched their best workers accept jobs with the UN or foreign NGOs once the latter began to tap local talent. "The end effect has been to weaken our development programmes," an NGO representative told *Africa Recovery*.

The international NGOs also had easy access to hard currency for needed imports and vehicles able to withstand Zaire's brutally pot-holed roads, and could use UN fax machines and attend regular UN security briefings. Local NGOs, by contrast, own few vehicles and must carefully pre-plan each mile of travel to minimize petrol expenses. Few have hard currency, increasingly necessary to buy even local supplies, as the influx of relief dollars has made local merchants reluctant to accept Zairian currency.

Insecurity has also increased. Mr. Mpirikana Forongo of ACODRI, a Goma-based environmental group, said the refugees had sold arms to local Zairians, contributing to the militarization of local conflicts, especially in the Masisi and Walikale areas north of Goma. Close to 10,000 Zairians of Tutsi origin fled to Rwanda in late 1995 and early 1996 seeking greater safety from attacks by armed Hutu militias north of Goma. Another 150,000 Hunde people northeast of Goma are now displaced, driven from their farmland by bands of well-armed Rwandan Hutu militia who have moved in to support their Zairian kin.

These growing tensions fueled a brief Zairian effort in February, under a December agreement reached with UNHCR, to pressure refugees to leave by limiting economic activities in and outside the camps. Most refugees have refused to leave, fearing trial or other reprisals for actual or alleged involvement in the 1994 genocide should they return to Rwanda. By early March, the unpaid Zairian soldiers had stopped encircling targeted camps and Zaire's government was considering other options. While Zaire has agreed not to return the refugees by force, many Zairians would enthusiastically back such a move.

Dealing with the local social and economic effects of the refugee crisis "will take a process lasting at least one generation," says Mr. Bagenda Balagizi, head of the Bukavu-based Anti-Bwaki ["anti-hunger"] Committee. But whether the international community will provide significant assistance to that process remains to be seen. — C.C.

late March, the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burundi, Mr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, chided the European Union (EU) for not deploying the five human rights monitors it agreed to fund a year ago. The EU, however, claims government resistance delayed their arrival. While the UN requested a total of 35 monitors, Mr. Pinheiro says at least 100 are needed. Staffing of the UN Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda fell by 25 per cent to 93 by the end of January due to insufficient contributions. Aid pledged to help reconstruct Rwanda has been notoriously late: of $10 mn pledged to help rebuild its justice system, only $260,000 reportedly arrived by January 1996.

Betty Press / UNICEF

Children being vaccinated against disease at a Rwandan refugee camp in Zaire.

The UN role in the Central African crisis has been controversial from the beginning. The Rwandan government, charging that the UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) failed to act effectively in 1994 to halt the genocide, refused to allow it to extend its mission beyond 8 March, and the last of the 1,200 UN peacekeepers withdrew on 18 April. The government also insisted on excluding the UN and key agencies like UNHCR from participating in the Cairo and Tunis meetings, even though many recommendations touched on UN and UNHCR work. However, the government did accept a proposal in April for the establishment of a small political office, called the UN Office in Rwanda (UNOR), to assist the country in promoting national reconciliation and reconstruction.

NGOs under scrutiny

Some believe that the decline in donor aid partly reflects their distaste for aiding those refugees suspected of complicity in the 1994 genocide, some of whom were found working on the payrolls of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The US Committee for Refugees and other policy groups have pressed NGOs to more rigorously screen current and potential field staff to weed out such people.

Other NGOs are wrestling with how to maintain their neutrality, especially in Burundi where, as a recent Médecins sans frontières report noted, "any action taken in favour of victims belonging to one of the two communities in conflict is seen by extremists of the other community as a hostile act." At least 16 of 45 foreign NGOs joined Burundi's government, army and two leading political parties in opposing UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's proposal to deploy UN guards to protect relief agency personnel, fearing that such protection might compromise their neutrality and create divisions between themselves and the local NGOs. NGO relations with the Rwandan government were recently complicated by the government's December move to expel 38 mainly French NGOs from Rwanda and suspend 18 others, while allowing the remaining 102 to continue their work.

Governments in the region have recently initiated various efforts to lessen the grip of violence. In early 1996, the Tanzanian government detained an estimated 400 Rwandans accused of intimidating refugees who wanted to return home. The Zairian government similarly detained about a dozen suspected intimidators. And in March, the Burundian government banned seven publications accused of inciting ethnic hatred.

Failure to bring those who committed genocide or other violence to justice remains a major obstacle to long-term regional reconciliation. Deciding how to deal with the sheer number of Rwandan refugees who participated in the genocide is perhaps the biggest challenge. A November 1995 conference in Kigali co-sponsored by the Rwandan government outlined categories of crimes committed during the genocide and recommended setting up a special court for such cases and a plea-bargaining structure that borrows heavily from South Africa's experience. It also urged compensation for survivors and a committee to plan a memorial to those slaughtered in 1993.

In another development, a major study released in March argued that the failure to intervene early in Rwanda made the international community "share responsibility for the fact that genocide was allowed to begin" as well as "for the extent of it." The five-volume study, *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons From the Rwanda Experience,* was co-funded and co-authored by 35 UN agencies and departments, donor governments, the European Union and NGO coalitions coordinated by Denmark's international aid agency DANIDA. One of the major lessons, it argued, was the need for greater donor coordination and political will in the early stages of such complex emergencies.

The study documented how the very multiplicity of UN and donor agencies obstructed the pooling of resources and effective analysis of the early warning signs of impending genocide. It called for an "NGO code of conduct" to ensure greater accountability, greater sensitivity to local conditions and cultures, and closer partnerships with indigenous NGOs. In complex emergencies such as the one in Rwanda, the study also recommended the consolidation of all humanitarian operations and funding in one institution, namely the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs. ■

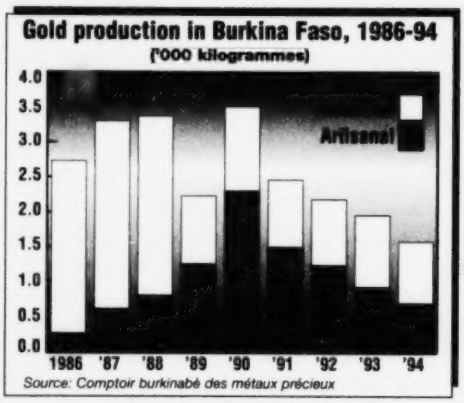
Burkina promotes mining development

New incentives to attract investors, but also an emphasis on sustainability

By **Ernest Harsch**

Does one of the keys to overcoming Burkina Faso's severe poverty lie beneath its soil? With growing international interest in the country's promising deposits of gold and other precious metals and the sector's increasing value as an export-earner, the government believes that it does. To highlight the importance of this potential, it has proclaimed the next 10 years the "decade of mining development," intending not simply to better exploit Burkina's mineral resources, but to do so in ways that safeguard the environment and contribute to broader economic and social development.

From geological surveys, 200 mineral-bearing sites have been identified, although only 40 have been prospected or are under exploitation. While the extent of Burkina's gold deposits are not fully known, they may compare with those of neighbouring Ghana, the major producer in West Africa. In addition, there are zinc, manganese, lead, silver, bauxite, iron, chromite, phosphates, diamonds and other minerals. Since the late 1980s, minerals have moved into second place as an export-earner, after cotton.



Source: Comptoir burkinabé des métaux précieux

The most extensive industrial operation is at Poura, where the majority state-owned Mining Research and Exploitation Company of Burkina (Soremib) produced 12.7 tonnes of gold and 1.8 tonnes of silver from underground and surface workings between 1984 and 1992. Since 1988, however, the collapse of a mine shaft and other problems have seriously reduced production.

Since the adoption of a structural adjustment programme in 1991, the government has been looking to the private sector to play a predominant role in boosting mining output, and Soremib is slated for privatization. International Gold Resources, a Canadian-registered firm, agreed last year to help Soremib rehabilitate the Poura mine, with additional financing coming from the European Development Fund. In 1992, a second, smaller industrial gold mine was opened in Essakane, with a French firm as the majority owner.

Investor interest

Since the adoption of a more liberal mining code in 1993, foreign investors have been coming to Burkina in increasing numbers. According to Mr. Modeste Dabira, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Energy and Mines, as of August 1995, the government had issued to foreign and local companies a total of 78 mining permits, of which 50 were for exploration and prospecting and 28 for exploitation (mainly for artisanal gold mining). Some $22 mn have been invested in exploration so far.

In early December 1995, mining experts and prospective investors converged on the capital, Ouagadougou, for a five-day investment forum. Known as "Promin '95," the forum attracted considerable interest, drawing some 250 participants, including 100 foreign investors from North America, Europe, Australia and South Africa, as well as representatives from 20 neighbouring countries and multilateral aid agencies. It was jointly organized by the Office of Mines and Geology of Burkina (Bumigeb) and the UN Department for Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS), for the UN Development Programme (UNDP), which has been assisting Burkina's mining development for more than two decades. In the weeks following the forum, several new prospecting deals were concluded with Canadian and South African firms.

With the private sector taking up a greater stake in production activities, the government's role in mining will focus increasingly on providing services and ensuring compliance with safety and environmental regulations. UNDP, which assisted in the revision of the mining code, has also supported the establishment of a geological database for use by investors.

During the late 1980s, a gold rush by small-scale miners in the north led to a sharp increase in artisanal mining, which in some years produced more gold than the troubled industrial mine at Poura (see graph). Such artisanal mining provides employment to some 100,000 people during the dry season, but with little security. It has also damaged water sources and fragile soils, while extensive smuggling of gold to Mali and Togo has deprived the government of significant tax revenues.

According to Mr. Emile Zoungrana, Burkina's Director of Mines, the World Bank is helping the government develop mining measures to strengthen environmental protection, improve the conditions of artisanal exploitation by providing sanitary and educational facilities in neighbouring villages, and encourage the consolidation of individual artisanal operations into small- or medium-sized mines.

Beyond the short-term

In many developing countries, private investment in mining has led to a preoccupation with short-term gains, with little concern for environmental consequences, the rational use of natural resources or possible linkages to broader development goals, Ms. Béatrice Labonne, a director of DDSMS, told the mining forum. For mining to contribute to sustainable development, she emphasized, the immediate interests of the mining companies must be balanced with the country's long-term economic and social needs.

The government and mining companies, she continued, should ensure "that a significant portion of the revenues from mining activities is reinvested in local social and economic development, that pollution is kept to acceptable levels and that afterwards the environment is rehabilitated from the effects of mining activities."

In a similar vein, Mr. Craig Andrews, a mining economist at the World Bank, told the forum that there should be an equitable sharing of revenues and other economic benefits, as well as respect for "local customary, spiritual, and land ownership traditions." He noted that Burkina's government is preparing an application for a $20-25 mn technical assistance credit for the mining sector, and expected that it would be presented for approval to the Bank's Board of Directors during the first half of 1996. ■

Africa moves to slow the spread of AIDS

New UN body to support Africa's community-based efforts to battle HIV

By **Margaret A. Novicki**

Africa is a "forerunner" in proving one of the main lessons of the past decade's fight against AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) — that "prevention can work." And it is also at the forefront of positive responses to the epidemic, with a network of community-based and non-governmental organizations which have actively "taken on this disease," says Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director of the recently created Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS), which is based in Geneva.

"What we are starting to see now is really a slowing of the spread of HIV (the human immunodeficiency virus which causes AIDS) in several [African] countries," said Dr. Piot, a Belgian physician and microbiologist who has worked on AIDS for over a decade, citing Uganda and Zimbabwe as examples. In Zimbabwe, he noted, there is a decline in the incidence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) which fuel the epidemic, as well as a "very high increase in condom use." There has also been limited success in containing the virus' spread within smaller communities — "from sex workers in Kinshasa, Zaire, to the workplace in Zambia for instance," Dr. Piot explained.

While only preliminary, these positive indicators are nonetheless good news for the continent that has been the hardest hit so far by the AIDS epidemic. Africa is home to 13 million adults living with HIV, or 65 per cent of the world's total, according to latest estimates from UNAIDS. Of the 7,500 new infections that occur daily world-wide, 50 per cent are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Women bear a particularly harsh burden. Close to eight million sub-Saharan women are HIV-positive — out of 10 million women infected world-wide — and have transmitted the virus to as many as one million children in the womb, during childbirth, or through breast-feeding.

The experience of the last 10 years, said Dr. Piot, has shown that controlling the epidemic involves much more than promoting condoms or safer sex. "You also need to provide an environment that is enabling people to make use of these preventive measures, to make sure the options are there. What are the options for poor women in particular to say no to unwanted sex?", he asked.

Indeed, the complexity of the issues surrounding HIV and AIDS is only beginning to be understood. The first step has been reaching a consensus and raising awareness that AIDS is more than a health problem, but also a development problem, and perhaps nowhere more so than in Africa. Many of the "driving forces" of the epidemic, Dr. Piot explained, have to do with "deeply rooted societal and cultural factors" such as the status of women, poverty and migration.

In Africa, the spread of HIV has followed population movements, often fueled by poverty and lack of economic prospects, as well as by wars and instability. HIV also finds fertile ground where issues of poverty, gender and powerlessness intersect. Due to their subordinate socio-economic status, women may have difficulty exerting control over their sexual lives. They may also lack information about HIV prevention and access to affordable health care, particularly for the treatment of STDs, which, along with other conditions such as infibulation and genital scarification, increase susceptibility to HIV.

Striking men and women primarily in their most productive years, AIDS affects critical sectors of the workforce, both urban and rural, and ultimately impacts on overall economic performance. The epidemic's indirect costs — the value of lost economic output through morbidity and early death — are difficult to measure, but nonetheless substantial. Dr. Piot cited case studies of countries which may lose 10-15 per cent of their teachers to AIDS.

There are direct costs as well, which are mainly health-related. By the year 2000, the World Bank estimates that costs of care for people living with HIV and AIDS in Africa will double, rising to $347 mn per year. But the heaviest socio-economic impact falls "on individuals and households which are on the verge of poverty," according to Dr. Piot, because the disease attacks the breadwinners — those responsible for the care and support of children, the elderly and other members of the extended family.

Milton Grant / UN

Ms. Noerine Kaleeba of Uganda's The AIDS Support Organization, flanked by Dr. Peter Piot (right), Executive Director of UNAIDS, and Mr. Eric Sawyer (left), co-founder of Housing Works, at the 1995 observance of World AIDS Day at the United Nations.

While virtually every African country now has a national AIDS programme, there is still a "heavy stigma" attached to the disease at the official level, Dr. Piot pointed out. This is manifested in a continued denial of the severity of the epidemic's impact and a lack of commitment to address it by some government leaders.

Even those who have acknowledged the gravity of the public health threat may ignore the epidemic's wider socio-economic impact, focusing only on the clinical aspect of the disease and its treatment. This is not a particularly constructive approach when Africa's health systems are already in crisis and health budgets, in some cases no more than $10 per capita per year, cannot cope with the epidemic's costs.

The most effective line of response, said Dr. Piot, is at the community level: first "to make AIDS more visible" and then "to strengthen the

link between care, support and prevention." The pioneer of this approach is The AIDS Support Organization (TASO) in Uganda, which has served as a model for many other such organizations around the continent. With its theme of "Positive Living with AIDS," TASO offers counselling and training to people with HIV and AIDS and their families as well as community outreach programmes which provide thousands of people with information, medical care and material support.

Other African initiatives

But there are also many other lesser-known initiatives under way around the continent which seek to mitigate the socio-economic impact of HIV and AIDS and to provide support where governments are unable or unwilling to do so. Among them are:

- the Women and AIDS Support Network in Zimbabwe, which conducts informational campaigns about how HIV affects women;
- the Salvation Army Hospital in Chikankata, Zambia, which links home-based care to community prevention programmes;
- St. Martin's Clinic in Agomanya, Ghana, which has launched income-generating activities in order to provide women with options other than commercial sex work;
- David Whitehead Textiles and the Commercial Farmers' Union in Zimbabwe, which conduct workplace-based AIDS information and education programmes;
- WAMATA in Tanzania, which helps to strengthen community care for children who have lost one or both parents to AIDS and provides material support to families affected by HIV and AIDS;
- Undugu Society in Kenya, which undertakes AIDS education and care for street children; and
- the Philly Lutaaya Initiative in Uganda, which encourages people with HIV to go public, educate the community and minimize stigma and discrimination.

Central to any effective response to the epidemic, said Dr. Piot, are two core elements. One is a legal and ethical environment which protects and supports the rights of people living with HIV and AIDS. The second is a commitment to involving people living with HIV and AIDS in raising awareness, in policy discussions, and in lobbying for their rights. Africa has made progress in these areas by launching continent-wide networks (see box).

UNAIDS actively seeks to involve such individuals and organizations in its work, and has at least two HIV-positive persons on its governing board. Superseding the World Health Organization's Global Programme on AIDS, UNAIDS became operational in January 1996 and also encompasses the AIDS programmes of the UN Development Programme, the UN Children's Fund, the UN Population Fund, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the World Bank. It was devised to facilitate "joint planning for the UN response to the AIDS epidemic so that we speak with one voice and we can increase our support to the countries," said Dr. Piot.

Donors and some of the most affected countries, such as Uganda and Thailand, which had been critical of perceived overlap in AIDS programmes in the past, are now looking at UNAIDS as "a more efficient and effective response of the UN system, an experiment in coordination," Dr. Piot said. UNAIDS will act as a mobilizer, he explained, leveraging support not only from the co-sponsors, but also from partners outside the UN system. It will also concentrate on the development of "best practices" — bringing together the collective experiences of the co-sponsoring agencies to determine what have been the most successful approaches to the epidemic.

Africa will be a focal point for UNAIDS programmes "because of the stage of its epidemic, because of the experience that is there – we will make it clear to the world that a lot of what we can do about AIDS was developed in Africa – and because of a greater need for external assistance in many African countries," Dr. Piot said. "That is a commitment we have." ■

Africa's AIDS networks provide support and advocacy

Along with the recognition that AIDS must be tackled within a broader socio-economic context has come an awareness of the importance of creating a protective and supportive legal, ethical and human rights environment in Africa and other regions hard-hit by the epidemic.

The UN Development Programme (UNDP) sponsored exploratory missions in 1992 and 1993 to various African countries for discussions on forming a network on ethics and the law with lawyers, ethicists, people living with HIV and AIDS, and representatives of national AIDS programmes, government ministries, non-governmental and community-based organizations and human rights and women's groups.

The African Network on Ethics, Law and HIV was officially set up during an inter-country consultation held in Dakar, Senegal, in 1994, which also drafted and signed the Declaration of Dakar, a 10-point statement of principle for formulating ethical responses to the HIV epidemic. The declaration addresses issues of non-discrimination, empowerment, confidentiality and privacy, ethics in research, and prohibition of mandatory HIV testing.

Since the Dakar meeting, members of national networks have been involved in stimulating debate in their countries, providing support to relevant HIV and AIDS service organizations, and ensuring that issues of ethics, law and human rights are integrated in national responses to the epidemic.

Another important element in formulating effective responses to the HIV epidemic is involving people affected by HIV and AIDS in advocacy and programme planning. The Network for African People Living with HIV and AIDS (NAP+) was born out of the meeting of two young HIV-positive men, Michael Angaga of Kenya and David Chipanta of Zambia, at a UNDP-sponsored HIV and development capacity-building workshop in Senegal in 1993. Together, they drew up a proposal which received seed funds from UNDP to help prepare the network through coordination offices in Nairobi and Lusaka.

A regional conference of Africans with HIV and AIDS was then held in Mombasa, Kenya, in May 1994, bringing together 50 participants from 13 African countries, who then agreed to form the network. Additional national chapters are being established and added to the continent-wide network. NAP+ was able to participate in the March 1995 meeting of the Global Network of People with HIV and AIDS in Cape Town, South Africa, and the International Conference on AIDS and STDs in Africa, held in Kampala, Uganda, in December.

The objectives of NAP+ include: to strengthen the quality of care for people with HIV and AIDS, to empower people with the virus to influence policies on issues that affect them, to help set up support groups and coordinate their activities, to push for the availability of therapeutic drugs, to do advocacy work on legal and ethical issues, and to lobby decision-makers for increased support to people with HIV and AIDS.

Global Coalition debates Africa's future

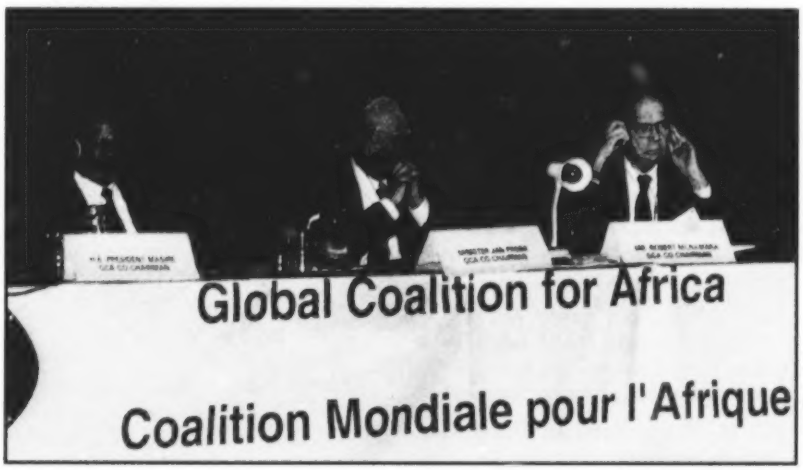
Governance is at the top of reform agenda, concludes Maastricht II conference

By **Ernest Harsch**
Maastricht

Over the past five years, a number of African countries have achieved some success in pursuing economic and political reforms, but the overall climate continues to elicit "serious concern," said Botswana's President Ketumile Masire at the opening plenary session of the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA). "Too many people in our continent still live in misery and poverty, and continue to be denied basic human rights."

That sober assessment by one of the three GCA co-chairs was shared by most participants at the two-day plenary (27-28 November), the first since the Dutch government hosted a ground-breaking international conference on Africa in Maastricht in 1990, which led to the GCA's formation (see box, page 25). With the aim of continuing the search for solutions to Africa's multiple difficulties, several hundred officials (including five African presidents and four prime ministers), academics, leaders of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and representatives of key donor agencies and institutions had returned for "Maastricht II."

Organized around the theme "Africa's Future and the World," some of the discussions inevitably dealt with the difficult external environment. But the overall axis of the debate was what African countries can and must do for themselves.



Robbert Stegman

The co-chairmen at Maastricht (from left): President Ketumile Masire of Botswana, Dutch Development Cooperation Minister Jan Pronk, and former World Bank President Robert McNamara.

Sharp debate on contentious issues

The discussions were free and far-ranging. As the GCA is an informal platform for policy dialogue, the exchanges were often more spontaneous than at other international gatherings. Most speakers avoided prepared statements and heeded the call by Dutch Development Cooperation Minister Jan Pronk, another GCA co-chair, to engage in "open, frank political discussion." This included sharp debate over such contentious issues as donor conditionality and structural adjustment.

According to Mr. Robert McNamara, GCA co-chair and a former World Bank President, three themes emerged clearly in the conference deliberations. First, despite the welcome end to major civil wars in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Angola, "Africa remains vulnerable to the threat of catastrophic internal conflicts," Mr. McNamara said in the co-chairs' closing statement. Citing Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and Liberia, as well as the "alarming deterioration of governance" in Nigeria, he said "it is therefore imperative that Africa develop its own capacity to address such conflicts."

Second, Mr. McNamara continued, "Africa faces problems of governance which are also far more severe than those of other regions," with popular participation, transparency in government operations and accountability all insufficient, despite the widespread movement in Africa towards democratic forms of government. And third, Africa's economic and social performance on average "has been far below what had been expected, far below what has been achieved in Latin America and Asia, and far below what should have been achieved given Africa's potential."

Participants were not optimistic about the international economic climate. While several donor representatives pledged to maintain current aid levels, most believed it highly unlikely that development assistance would rise substantially in the near future. Moreover, they felt, the rapid globalization of international trading and financial systems threatened to marginalize Africa even further, unless the continent could greatly increase its competitiveness, diversify its exports and push much harder to integrate its internal markets.

The GCA co-chairs affirmed that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with the Paris Club, should work with each low-income country to establish a comprehensive "exit strategy" to alleviate their foreign debt burdens. To loud applause, Mr. McNamara said this should include reducing debt service payments to no more than 20 per cent of a country's expected export earnings. (Debt servicing currently averages about 19 per cent of export receipts across sub-Saharan Africa, but for heavily indebted countries the ratio is often much higher.)

In addition to tackling a range of other topics — from the prospects for Africa's further democratization and ways to encourage greater domestic savings and investment, to the importance of reducing corruption and reforming donors' aid policies — the conference also conducted a critical appraisal of the GCA itself.

Participants felt that the discussions organized by the GCA during its first five years were helpful in clarifying points of consensus and of continuing disagreement, especially between African governments and Northern donors. They agreed that the GCA should continue for another five years as an informal catalyst for dialogue, with only a small, Washington-based secretariat.

However, to help further strengthen the African role within the GCA, it was decided to

expand the number of co-chairs from three to six. President Masire, Mr. McNamara, and Mr. Pronk, who have chaired the GCA since its inception, will now be joined by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia (his country's former president), former President Nicéphore Soglo of Benin, and Canadian Minister of State for Africa Christine Stewart. All except Mr. Soglo were in Maastricht.

In addition, the GCA resolved to expand the direct involvement of NGO representatives. This followed a two-day academic conference and a day of meetings by NGOs (see pages 26 and 29), which were critical of the GCA's previous focus on discussions between African governments and donors. Those events, plus the vocal participation of NGO leaders in the GCA plenary sessions, reflected an increased effort to open up the GCA to broader perspectives.

Political reform at the forefront

Reinforcing the GCA's early and continuing concern with issues of governance, a significant part of the debates in Maastricht was devoted to political reform. As President Masire affirmed at the plenary's opening, good governance underpins the entire reform process: "Accountable, transparent and law-abiding government creates a climate of confidence that is required for citizen initiatives and economic expansion. It also ensures full participation of women in the political, economic and social development of our countries."

Invited to kick off the debate on political reform, Baroness Linda Chalker, Britain's Minister for Overseas Development, said there were four important aspects of good governance: legitimacy resulting from people's adequate participation and choice, transparency in decision-making, government competence in making and implementing appropriate policies, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. Britain's aid, she said, would be made available to those governments in Africa that embrace democracy, weed out corruption and seek to reduce poverty.

Ms. Frene Ginwala, Speaker of South Africa's Parliament: Democracy must be more than a ritual.

Robert Stephen

Baroness Chalker asked: "How should we respond to those who say this is a Western agenda not suited to Africa?", a charge heard frequently at the academic conference on governance held a few days before the plenary. "My answer is straightforward. The standards are for developed and developing countries alike."

Most African leaders at the plenary agreed. Some emphasized, however, that genuine democracy goes far beyond multiparty elections. Ms. Frene Ginwala, Speaker of South Africa's Parliament, who also helped launch the discussion, declared that democracy is not limited to elections or a multiparty system. "You need the freedom of association. You need the freedom of information. You need the freedom to challenge and to monitor government and other officials. Without that kind of society, democracy becomes a ritual." It is particularly important to open up government to all citizens, not just organized groups within civil society, she said, citing the submission of her country's new draft constitution for public comment and the reception of some 2 million responses.

Along similar lines, President Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea declared that "good governance should be viewed not as a mere function of the multiplicity of political parties, but in terms of the real empowerment of the people in all their diversity. With the right mix of policies, diversity can enrich the democratic process and enhance national cohesion." Among the steps towards that end, he suggested affirmative action for deprived groups, constitutional guarantees of the cultural integrity and linguistic heritage of different peoples and the consolidation of effective regional and sub-regional cooperation.

Women must also be accorded a greater role in African political life, a number of speakers emphasized. Ugandan Deputy Prime Minister E.T.S. Adriko reported his country's introduction of an affirmative action policy, with women comprising one-sixth of parliamentarians, many of them elected to seats reserved for females. However, Ugandan Vice-President Speciosa Kazibwe, currently the highest-ranking female government official in Africa, was elected to a non-reserved seat.

The Global Coalition's first five years

Although the Global Coalition for Africa was not formally established until 1991, it had its real beginning at the first Maastricht conference held in July 1990. Sponsored by the Dutch government, "Maastricht I" drew senior representatives from a number of African countries, as well as officials of bilateral and multilateral donor agencies and institutions, with the declared aim of forging a broad consensus on Africa's reform process. Despite concerns from some quarters about the representativeness of the grouping and its possible duplication of the United Nations' role as a forum for discussion and debate, it was agreed to form a loose political coalition, the GCA, to serve as a platform for ongoing dialogue between African and donor representatives on selected issues. The three co-chairs of the first Maastricht conference, Botswana President Ketumile Masire, former World Bank President Robert McNamara and Dutch Development Cooperation Minister Jan Pronk, became the co-chairs of the GCA, and a small secretariat was set up in Washington.

From the beginning, the need for improved governance and democratization and for sustainable economic reform were prevailing concerns of the GCA. At subsequent Advisory Committee meetings in Paris, Kampala, Cotonou and Harare, as well as at various meetings of the GCA sub-committees, the Coalition also focused on regional economic integration and cooperation; population growth, agricultural development and the environment; and resource flows to Africa. In 1993, the GCA was a co-organizer with the government of Japan and the UN of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development. That same year, the first GCA-NGO conference took place in Porto-Novo, Benin.

Looking back over the Coalition's first half-decade, the GCA co-chairs concluded that the original consensus reached at Maastricht I has been reaffirmed, but also expanded to include additional items. Some aspects, such as the importance of domestic resource mobilization and of conducting economic reforms within a longer-term development perspective, have become more prominent. Overall, the co-chairs observed, "Good governance, which emerged five years ago as an incipient, vaguely defined issue of donor conditionality, is now a major subject of debate and definition within Africa, and is widely recognized as the reform that underpins all other reforms."

Ms. Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the recent Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, was among the participants who criticized the GCA for not specifically including women's issues on its agenda. "I did not see much of the Beijing decisions in the GCA documents," she said. Others, including Ms. Aminata Traoré, an NGO leader from Mali, pointed to the predominance of men on the conference podium.

Ernest Harsch

It was partly in response to such criticisms that the GCA decided to include a woman among its new co-chairs. At the end of the conference, Mr. McNamara also announced that he would likely resign as a co-chair in 1996 — on the condition that his replacement is an African woman.

Path to democracy

A number of speakers argued strongly that Africa needs to find its own path to democracy, with its own specific forms and at its own pace. "If we're not ready to solve our own problems, no one else will do it," Benin's then Minister of State Désiré Vieyra said. Turning to the donor country representatives, he appealed, "Don't always push us."

"We are not opposed to conditionality as a whole. We are opposed to micro-management....Give us the benefit of the doubt. We can't have trust if you try to micro-manage our economies."

— Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi

In similar terms, Mr. Hassan Sunmonu, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, declared that peace and stability could only come through democracy. "Not a democracy imposed on Africa," he added, "but one that it has designed for itself." He cited the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development, adopted in 1990 at a conference in Arusha, Tanzania, as providing many of the essential elements of such a democratic vision.

Several participants saw Africa's severe economic difficulties as an obstacle to lasting political reform. "Democracy in a young country like Malawi is very fragile," then Vice-President Chakufwa Chihana told the plenary. "Unless poverty is seriously tackled and addressed, I can't see democracy hanging on. A starving person is an angry person." It is in such areas that the donors can play an essential role, said Namibian Foreign Minister Theo-Ben Gurirab. "What we need is a mobilization of resources to make democracy work."

'Africa must clean its house'

To help mobilize greater resources, both domestic and external, African countries need to take energetic steps to stem corruption and halt the hemorrhaging of scarce funds into foreign bank accounts, many conference participants agreed. "I firmly believe that Africa must find the inner strength to search its soul, clean its house and relaunch itself on the path of real development," declared President Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea.

President Alpha Oumar Konaré noted that in Mali, as in other countries, "democracy has made corruption more visible." He explained that political parties are often dependent on private sources of funding and thus become susceptible to corrupting influences, from the wealthy as well as from multinational corporations. He suggested developing mechanisms of public financing of parties to lessen such dependence. Former Malian head of state Amadou Toumani Touré noted that even when corrupt former officials are brought to trial, as has happened in his country, it often proves very difficult to retrieve embezzled funds, especially if they have been deposited in foreign accounts.

Frequently, the discussions turned to the international connection, especially the role that donor countries and multinational corporations have often played in promoting corruption in Africa. "It takes two to tango," Baroness

Vigorous debate on notions of "governance"

Just what is good governance? Who is determining the governance agenda? How can Africans better take charge of setting their own political priorities? Such probing questions were debated on 23-24 November by some 200 academics, students, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others at Maastricht's University of Limburg. Focused on the theme of "Good Governance for Africa: Whose Governance?", the conference was organized expressly to address one of the central concerns highlighted by the Global Coalition for Africa, and a summary of its conclusions was presented to the GCA plenary meeting a few days later.

Some speakers, such as former Ghanaian Finance Minister Kwesi Botchwey, underscored the different meanings that lie behind the term "good governance." Initially, Mr. Botchwey noted, it was often considered simply a call for democratic elections. A number of donor institutions regard it as a way to "downsize" the state in Africa, a "decidedly wrong focus," in his view. Ms. Aminata Traoré, an NGO leader from Mali, believed that only one type of governance was currently being promoted in Africa, primarily from outside the continent. "Is it not time now to leave it to African society to create its own environment for governance?", she asked. Prof. Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Director of the Centre for African Development Studies in Burkina Faso, showed that aspects of good governance existed in indigenous African societies prior to European colonial rule, arguing that Africans once again should take the initiative on such issues.

Several speakers, among them Prof. Brian van Arkadie, a consultant based in Tanzania, and Mr. Jacques Bugnicourt, Executive Secretary of Environment and Development Action (ENDA), based in Senegal, drew attention to the linkages between good governance and structural adjustment, some which they considered to be highly contradictory.

During the final session at the university, a debate was held between Prof. Yash Tandon of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Zimbabwe and Mr. Herman Cohen, former US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and currently a member of the GCA Secretariat in Washington. Prof. Tandon sharply criticized "good governance" as an external model benefiting foreign corporations and African elites. He also accused the GCA of being "top-down" and "patronizing" and of operating within an economic and political reform framework set by the World Bank and the Western governments. In reply, Mr. Cohen denied that the GCA was seeking to impose a specific agenda on Africa, affirming that the Coalition welcomed open dialogue and sought to serve as a platform within which Africans could put forward their views to the donor community. "The whole purpose of the GCA is to help Africans take ownership of their own development," Mr. Cohen asserted.

Chalker said. "Where corruption has an international dimension — for example in contracts let by international bidding — it has to be of concern to the international community."

This point was very strongly underlined by Mr. Peter Eigen, Chairman of Transparency International, an NGO devoted to combatting corruption worldwide. "The principal source of grand corruption is in the North," he affirmed. In collaboration with the GCA, Transparency International has been active in a number of African countries, including Benin, South Africa, Malawi and Uganda, helping governments, political parties, NGOs and other sectors develop legislation and practices that would make bribery and other forms of corruption more difficult.

When Mr. Eigen noted that bribery of foreign officials is legal in most Northern countries, and even officially supported in some of them, a number of African participants expressed shock. "Please keep this out of Africa," appealed Ugandan Finance Minister J. Mayanja-Nkangi. If Northern governments are themselves promoting corruption in developing countries, he asked, "what is the moral strength of pointing fingers only at Africa?"

"[Donor] support must be worked out as a stop-gap measure designed to help the beneficiaries stand on their own feet, rather than perpetuating the vicious cycle of dependence."

— President Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea

Robbert Slagman

"Whatever solutions are found to ease debt service problems, they should not be allowed to divert attention from the larger problem of how to get domestic economies moving on a sustainable basis."

— IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus

Robbert Slagman

Tackling conflicts

No meaningful political or economic reform is possible if a country is torn by domestic conflict, conference participants agreed. And given the limited international response to crises such as those in Liberia or Rwanda, it was clear to many that Africa needs to develop its own capacity to resolve conflicts, especially to act at an early stage to prevent their outbreak.

Organization of African Unity (OAU) Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim pointed to the importance of the OAU's establishment of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in 1993. Although the Mechanism has been able to engage in preventive diplomacy in several African countries, the OAU remains "handicapped by the limitation of its resources," he emphasized. He noted that when nine African countries agreed to provide troops for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), it took from May to October 1994 to actually deploy them, due to the lack of sufficient logistical means.

The complex situation in Rwanda and Burundi was given special prominence by the presence during the first plenary session of the two countries' prime ministers, as well as former US President Jimmy Carter, who has been playing an active mediating role in the Great Lakes region. Burundi's Prime Minister Antoine Nduwayo appealed to the international community to become involved before the ongoing strife in his country erupts into full-scale warfare.

Rwandan Prime Minister Pierre-Celestin Rwigema requested assistance specifically for the international tribunals slated to try those accused of the mass killings of 1994. He, Mr. Carter, Mr. Salim and other speakers argued that justice for those crimes will be an essential component of national reconciliation in Rwanda. Both prime ministers also disputed the international media's tendency to label the conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi as simply "ethnic." The real problem, they insisted, was the manipulation of ethnic identities by politicians bent on maintaining or achieving power at any cost.

Nigeria also received considerable attention. To sustained applause from conference participants, Nigeria's Nobel Prize-winning writer, Wole Soyinka, fervently denounced the executions earlier that month of nine human rights and environmental activists by the Nigerian military regime. He welcomed the Commonwealth's condemnation of the executions, but criticized both the Commonwealth and the European Union for not applying stronger pressure on the Nigerian president to step down. Specifically, he urged the imposition of an international oil embargo.

Mr. Soyinka's strong words were echoed by other participants. President Konaré of Mali called the executions "shameful for Africa." Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe argued that democratic leaders in Africa must "take exception to military dictatorships in countries like Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Gambia." Mr. Pronk revealed at a later press conference that Nigeria had not been invited to attend the GCA plenary.

Ms. Stewart reported that Canada has set up a special $2 mn fund to help promote democracy and human rights in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Gambia. Henceforth, she said, Canada's aid policies would place greater emphasis on conflict prevention. This would include support for activities to protect human rights and to "minimize military expenditures and redirect such resources towards social and economic development priorities." According to Ms. Ginwala, South Africa has prohibited the export of arms to areas of conflict and to governments engaged in human rights violations.

Economic performance unimpressive

In his introductory remarks to the plenary session on economic issues, Dr. Kwesi Botchwey, Ghana's former finance minister, noted that economic performance across the continent has been highly varied and that it is important not to "get lost" in the averages. Compared to the years before economic reform programmes became widespread, he asserted, "there has been a significant improvement in the overall macroeconomic environment in a majority of sub-Saharan African countries." However, Dr. Botchwey acknowledged, overall economic performance across the region has not been impressive, "even among reforming countries."

In a similar vein, Mr. Edward V.K. Jaycox,

the World Bank's then Vice-President for Africa, emphasized that some 16 African countries had achieved positive per capita income growth in 1994, the largest number in many years. Yet at the same time, he noted, Africa is the only continent where poverty has been increasing. He estimated that the incidence of poverty cannot be reduced unless Africa is able to achieve an overall economic growth rate of 6 per cent annually, and an agricultural growth rate of 4 per cent a year.

Beyond initiatives to deal with such tough external issues as aid, debt and trade, many of which were left to the final plenary session, a number of steps were highlighted that African countries themselves could take to improve economic growth over the long haul. Above all, insisted Dr. Botchwey, African countries need to persevere with their reform efforts, identifying continuing policy weaknesses and working towards greater consensus on how to achieve sustainable economic growth. One feature of those countries that have attained reasonable levels of real GDP growth, he observed, was "increased expenditure on basic education and health care," even under difficult fiscal conditions.

A background paper prepared by the GCA secretariat placed particular emphasis on steps to increase domestic savings rates, in order to bolster both public and private investment. Currently, the average ratio of savings and investments to GDP is about 15 per cent in Africa, a figure that needs to increase to 25-30 per cent, the paper estimated.

Because most African economies are predominantly agrarian, with agriculture providing food and livelihoods to the vast majority of their populations, much greater attention also needs to be paid to that sector, the GCA paper stated. It argued that investment in rural infrastructure should be seen as an especially high priority.

"You cannot talk about African economies while ignoring agriculture," affirmed Mr. Baba Dioum, Coordinator-General of the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of West and Central Africa. "Agriculture must be considered the engine of development." New, affordable technologies must be introduced into Africa's countryside, he said, and fertilizer prices need to be reduced to promote increased usage, thereby boosting yields. "We need to prioritize African agriculture," Mr. Dioum stated, "not only in trade, but also in budgetary allocations."

"Policy measures, reform or otherwise, should be adopted because they are the right thing to do and not because this is what the World Bank or the IMF requires. This means we must have the right to differ."

— UNDP Assistant Administrator Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

Beyond short-term adjustments

There was broad agreement with Mr. Pronk's statement that "we need to put an end to traditional structural adjustment programmes, which looked only to the short-term. We need to replace these models with something better suited to Africa."

Tough economic reforms remain a vital necessity for Africa, Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the UN Development Programme's Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa reaffirmed in her introductory remarks to the session on economic issues. African countries that have performed the best are those which have "come to grips with national and global realities" and have "adopted the appropriate policy measures to keep their economies on even keel."

But Africa, Ms. Johnson Sirleaf added, should "reject the notion that this progress is attributable to structural adjustment, with its Bretton Woods institution imprimatur." African countries should "banish forever the name 'structural adjustment'," she suggested, adding, "Policy measures, reform or otherwise, should be adopted because they are the right thing to do and not because this is what the World Bank or the IMF requires. This means we must have the right to differ."

For example, she said, African countries may choose to subsidize agriculture as a means of achieving food security, as long as it is affordable, or be cautious in privatization to preserve infant industries. Development, above all, "is a long-term process with no quick fix," she argued, requiring the ability to engage in strategic thinking about the future, a strengthening of Africa's management capacity and a massive shift in the allocation of resources into activities that will help fight poverty. "Too much goes into debt servicing, conspicuous consumption and capital outflows stemming from corrupt practices. Change will require reallocating resources away from these areas to education, health, food security and gender equality."

Numerous speakers raised similar points, with some stressing the importance of maintaining social sector spending, others the need to avoid massive job losses resulting from widespread privatization, and yet others citing the vital role of government in protecting struggling domestic industries.

Robbert Stagman

Former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere and former US President Jimmy Carter.

Conditionality under fire

Repeatedly throughout the discussions, participants from Africa were highly critical of what they regarded as a proliferation and hardening of donor conditionalities. Dr. Botchwey set the tone when he urged the donor countries to treat African nations as equal partners, respectful of their integrity and sovereignty. "Unless these broad principles are respected, the talk of 'ownership' of the reform initiative will remain a sham as recipient governments feel

constrained to 'own' and 'accept' investment priorities and policy choices in order to obtain vital aid resources."

"Some reforms are being imposed on us and are not necessary," former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere said in the discussions. "You can privatize for good economic reasons, but a lot of privatization is being pushed for ideological reasons." He acknowledged that some previous African government policies had been marked by "certain stupidities," and thus had to go. For that reason, he said, "there is an inherent virtue in structural adjustment." But when these programmes are actually negotiated with the donors, "there is not enough listening to Africa."

Representatives from Benin, Chad, Mauritania and other countries complained that donor conditions are often contradictory and confusing, with unrealistic expectations about prompt results and with abrupt and frequent shifts in the donors' own preferences. "Some of our international financial partners are not very realistic in approaching our problems," noted Mozambican Prime Minister Pascoal Mocumbi. "It does not make sense to set goals that cannot be attained." As an example, he questioned the wisdom of large-scale privatizations in a country like Mozambique, which is recovering from decades of war, where two-thirds of the population live in poverty and where almost no Mozambicans have capital to take over privatized enterprises.

Robbert Slagman

Pierre Sané, President of Amnesty International, at the NGO gathering.

Ethiopia's Prime Minister Meles drew a distinction between broad performance targets and excessively detailed donor interventions. "We are not opposed to conditionality as a whole," he said. "We are opposed to micro-management." Negotiations with donor countries and agencies can often be a torturous process in which the donors apply constant pressure, over long periods of time, "until you are finally frustrated out of your wits." He cited the example of a specific dispute with the World Bank, involving little more than a difference of three months in the opening of foreign exchange bureaus within Ethiopian banks. "Give us the benefit of the doubt," he appealed. "We can't have trust if you try to micro-manage our economies."

Prime Minister Meles also saw an inherent contradiction between donor micro-management and democratization in Africa. When reform packages are "written down, to the last comma, outside Africa," competing political parties within African countries are unable to present voters with real alternative programmes. "Multipartyism becomes a sham, a choice between personalities rather than a choice between policies," he said. "Africa is not being given the chance to choose between policies."

Risks of marginalization

Economic globalization brings both major risks and huge opportunities, Mr. Michel Camdessus, Managing Director of the IMF, noted in his

NGOs call for a broader Global Coalition

The Global Coalition for Africa should remain "an independent and inclusive forum for genuine dialogue and consensus-building between Africa and its development partners in the North," declared African non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in a statement presented to the GCA plenary. The NGOs hoped that the process of bringing together representatives of government and civil society, started at the first Maastricht conference in 1990, would also continue. But at the same time, they expressed deep concern about "subtle attempts to use the GCA as a conduit for implementing wrong and unpopular economic policies imposed on Africa by the World Bank and the IMF."

Read out to the plenary by Mr. Joshua Gwitira, the Regional Director for Africa of Consumers International, the African NGO statement urged the GCA to help strengthen the capacity of African institutions and to give priority to Africa's own initiatives. It called on the GCA to support the participation and empowerment of women, and affirmed that the 1990 African Charter for Popular Participation in Development should constitute the basis of good governance in Africa. But the statement then went on to note "elements of contradiction that tend to arise between notions of good governance on the one hand and structural adjustment programmes that narrow the space of the poor on the other." The African NGOs also condemned the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight of his colleagues in Nigeria and urged the international community to impose oil and sports embargoes on the Nigerian government.

The conflict in Nigeria also received prominent attention during a conference of NGOs (both African and non-African) held in Maastricht on 25 November 1995, just before the GCA Advisory Committee and plenary meetings. Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka reiterated calls for international action to protest the executions and to press for a return to democratic rule. "Nigeria constitutes a moment that will define the future of the continent," he affirmed. The importance of ensuring human rights throughout Africa was further emphasized by Mr. Pierre Sané, the Secretary-General of Amnesty International, who delivered the keynote address. "There will be no future," he declared, "without a commitment to protect human rights and satisfy basic human needs."

In a series of workshops, the NGOs focused on a variety of specific areas, including conflict and ethnicity, good governance, international trade, external resources, economic initiatives for low-income groups, religion, and the participation of women in public life. A workshop on NGOs and the Global Coalition drew special interest and stirred considerable discussion. At the workshop, both Mr. Charles Abugre of the Third World Network's Ghana-based Africa Secretariat, and Mr. John Mihevc of Partnership Africa-Canada were critical of the GCA's past structure and agenda, arguing in particular that it had not adequately reflected African and NGO perspectives on such controversial issues as structural adjustment. Mr. Herman Cohen of the GCA Secretariat in Washington acknowledged that the Coalition had not been very successful thus far in expanding its discussions beyond government and donor representatives. He hoped that future GCA debates would be "enriched by the participation of NGOs."

When the workshop results were presented to Mr. Jan Pronk and Mr. Robert McNamara, the two GCA co-chairs agreed on the importance of better involving NGOs and civil society groups in the GCA's deliberations. Mr. McNamara praised Mr. Pronk in particular for having pushed for greater NGO participation "from the beginning of the GCA," although such suggestions had initially met resistance from within the Coalition. The decision to bring NGOs and civil society representatives into the subsequent Advisory Committee and plenary meetings was an indication that such resistance has now been overcome.

introductory remarks to the final plenary session, on "Africa and the world." This should be a particular concern to Africa, he stressed, since economic progress on the continent has been far too slow. "Globalization is also the risk of marginalization of all those countries which are unable to adjust enough to integrate themselves into the mainstream" of a globalized economy, he said.

The GCA secretariat's background paper noted that sub-Saharan Africa, although accounting for 10 per cent of the world population, currently provides just 1.7 per cent of world exports. Due to a protracted decline in Africa's competitiveness, its small share of world trade has been shrinking over the past few decades. Citing studies on the impact of the Uruguay Round, the paper observed that the new international trading regime would result in immediate net losses for Africa.

Robbert Stagman

US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs George Moose

Mr. Nyerere expressed concern that little attention was paid to issues of compensation to Africa during those talks. This was despite the fact that African countries had signed the final accords like everyone else, thus obligating themselves to further liberalization of their own trading practices. "Many had hoped that the discussions would lead to compensation," Mr. Nyerere said.

Going past concerns about Africa's short-term losses, several speakers emphasized the importance of African countries coming to grips with the realities of today's world market, developing strategies to enhance their competitiveness and seeking out new opportunities to promote African exports, beyond the primary commodities upon which the continent currently depends. Mr. Botchwey noted, for example, that as labour costs rise in East Asia, the potential may be good for Africa to step in and develop its labour-intensive export industries.

For such efforts to succeed, however, Northern markets also need to be opened up to the outside world, argued Kenya's Minister of Finance Musalia Mudavadi. Currently, he noted, Kenya's textile industry is subjected to tariff barriers that limit its ability to export, and thus to further develop. If such tariffs are not lowered, he asked, "how then do we industrialize?"

Crisis in aid

There was general consensus that Africa continues to require significant injections of external assistance, especially in light of its slow growth, limited export prospects and onerous debt burden. "Even if Africa does all the right things," Denmark's Minister of Development Cooperation P. Nielson noted, "it will still need aid."

"No doubt," concurred President Isaias of Eritrea, "Africa will continue to require substantial support from its partners in its drive towards rapid economic growth." He then expressed a common concern among conference participants: "Such support, however, must be worked out as a stop-gap measure designed to help the beneficiaries stand on their own feet, rather than perpetuating the vicious cycle of dependence."

While a number of speakers stressed the importance of better coordinated and targeted external assistance, directed especially to areas that can enhance Africa's own capacities, the discussions tended to be overshadowed by the recent cuts in aid allocations by a number of key donor countries. Swedish Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Mats Karlsson specifically cited the US decision to reduce both bilateral and multilateral aid, and its accumulation of arrears to the UN. "We are entering a crisis of multilateralism of unseen dimensions," he warned, adding that "if multilateralism is hurt, so is Africa."

Taking the floor next, US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs George Moose said that he "fully agreed" with Mr. Karlsson. He vowed that the US administration would fight to restore its original request for a $1.4 bn allocation to the World Bank's concessional arm, the International Development Association (IDA), which had been cut in half by Congress. Africa's assumption of its own responsibilities, he added, will be an important element in helping change perceptions within the US.

Invited by Mr. Pronk to respond, Mr. John Sewell, President of the Overseas Development Council, a prominent Washington-based NGO, attributed the decline in US funding for IDA to both Congress and the administration. "The administration did not make the choices it needed to make," he asserted. African governments, Mr. Sewell urged, need to be involved in efforts to reform aid practices, while African civil society organizations also should be brought into discussions on bilateral aid packages.

Easing the debt 'nightmare'

With few at the conference expecting that aid flows to Africa can be increased anytime soon — and many uncertain that they can even be maintained at current levels — more attention was drawn to the importance of debt reduction. As Cameroon's Minister of Social Affairs Y. Aissatou put it, "All our sacrifices have been in vain because of the crippling debt. The debt today remains a living nightmare for the peoples of Africa." Echoing other speakers who stressed the links between economic and political change, she continued: "The weight of the debt is regarded as a source of tension, even of political instability. African leaders have lost credibility because they have not carried out their electoral programmes, because they lack the resources."

"The debt today remains a living nightmare for the peoples of Africa.... African leaders have lost credibility because they have not carried out their electoral programmes, because they lack the resources."

— Ms. Y. Aissatou, Cameroon Minister of Social Affairs

Mr. Adriko, Uganda's Deputy Prime Minister, noted that in 1992 his country had to devote 90 per cent of its export receipts to debt servicing. By 1995 this had been brought down to 60 per cent, an amount that is still "unsustainably high." If it is necessary to convince creditors that Uganda is serious about improving its financial management, and thus deserving of greater debt relief, Mr. Adriko added, "we are willing to open up our books to international audit."

Several times during the plenary and the NGO meetings that preceded the GCA conference, Mr. Pronk and Mr. McNamara stressed the need for new initiatives to reduce African debt burdens to sustainable levels. Multilateral debt, which accounts for a large portion of low-income countries' debt servicing obligations, requires special action. Mr. Pronk hoped

that a special facility could be financed with some of the World Bank's income or by sales of a small portion of the IMF's gold holdings, and that concrete proposals on multilateral debt would be taken up during the April 1996 meeting of the Development Committee of the IMF and World Bank. "Debt service payments should not exceed 20 per cent of forecasted export earnings," the GCA co-chairs affirmed in their closing statement read by Mr. McNamara. "Decisions to this end should be taken in 1996. For too many years effective action has been postponed."

Mr. Camdessus briefly addressed the debt issue in his remarks to the plenary. Based on analysis of Africa's debt by IMF and World Bank staff, he said that debt servicing "should be manageable" for a majority of African countries — but only if the Paris Club of official creditors "goes all the way" in implementing the Naples terms. "However," he continued, "in a few cases more relief may be needed than is currently available under existing mechanisms." He affirmed that the IMF would table this issue at the April Development Committee meeting.

But even in the unlikely event of complete removal of the debt burden, Africa's financial difficulties would not be over, Mr. Camdessus continued. Debt servicing accounts for an average of 20 per cent of export receipts, while Africa's total current account deficit stands at 70 per cent. "Even in the absence of debt service problems," he stressed, "these countries would still need external aid flows equivalent to some 50 per cent of export earnings to pay for current import bills. Hence, whatever solutions are found to ease debt service problems, they should not be allowed to divert attention from the larger problem of how to get economies moving on a sustainable basis, so that countries can finance an increasing share of their needs themselves and progress towards fully sustainable growth."

Future agenda

From its inception, the GCA's agenda has been a selective one, with the priorities shifting over time. As Mr. Pronk noted after the close of the final plenary, agenda items have a "sunset clause": once they have been thoroughly discussed or taken up more extensively by others, the GCA shifts its attention to questions that have not yet been adequately addressed. For this reason, some of the issues that preoccupied the GCA in its early years, such as population growth, are now discussed less extensively, in part because they are no longer as controversial. At the same time, new questions have moved to the fore, such as conflict resolution and women's advancement. But certain issues — including good governance, economic reform and regional integration — have remained part of the core agenda, since there is not yet full consensus on what they entail or how to practically achieve them.

In the co-chairs' closing statement, Mr. McNamara listed some of the main points that will feature on the Coalition's agenda over the next five years:

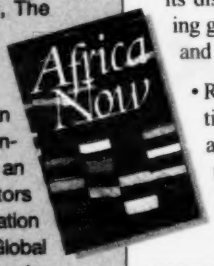
- The prevention of internal violence and the creation of effective conflict management mechanisms.
- Better governance, emphasizing accountability, transparency and inclusion of civil society in the policy-making process.
- The full empowerment and productive employment of women, and recognition of their crucial role in the political, economic and social development of their countries.
- Raising the rate of economic growth, securing greater equity in its distribution, and thus translating growth into poverty reduction and social advancement.
- Regional economic integration as an essential factor in achieving competitiveness in the new global economic order.

While there was a large measure of consensus during the conference, Mr. Pronk noted at a press conference, several issues still require further debate, in particular aid conditionality and "micro-management." In addition, issues of demilitarization, the withdrawal of military regimes and the role of international arms sales, while touched on in passing, were not adequately taken up at this conference, he said.

To help focus its future discussions, the GCA will set up two subcommittees — on political and economic issues — in place of the three that previously existed (on governance and democracy, economic reform, and regional cooperation and integration). At the same time, reported Mr. McNamara, the GCA's Advisory Committee will be expanded into a new Policy Forum, "in which all African countries committed to democratic policy reforms and sustainable human development can participate, together with the partner countries and institutions which are committed to supporting them in these reforms." In addition, the GCA will develop ways to involve African NGOs and civil society organizations in its work. The first meeting of the GCA Policy Forum is scheduled to be held in Burkina Faso in November 1996. ■

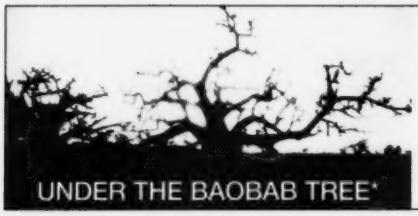
Review of a changing continent

Africa Now: People, Policies and Institutions, ed. Stephen Ellis (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague, in association with James Currey, London, and Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH; 1996; £35 Hb/£12.95 Pb).



From Algeria to South Africa, the entire African continent is undergoing major changes as the century draws to an end, and this book seeks to give an overview of many of the most significant factors behind those shifts. Dutch Development Cooperation Minister Jan Pronk, one of the co-chairs of the Global Coalition for Africa, told a session of the GCA conference in Maastricht that he hoped the book would make an important contribution to the GCA's analyses. Advance copies were distributed to many participants to provide background information for their discussions.

The contributors — who come from all parts of Africa as well as from outside the continent, and a number of whom have held senior positions in African governments and international organizations — have written chapters on a broad range of issues. These include the crisis of the state, nationalism and ethnicity, youth and violence, movements of religious renewal, public morality, agriculture, manufacturing, the informal sector, the institutional foundations of economic growth, regional integration, external aid, and migration. As Stephen Ellis notes in his introduction, the collection is less concerned with identifying technical factors affecting economic development, as much of the literature on Africa has previously done, than with examining "the relationship between individual Africans, the institutions which govern them at national or local level and which to some extent shape their lives, and the international context which has a bearing on both individuals and institutions."



Peace: the only solution for Liberia

by Djibril Diallo

As soon as pictures of the latest violence in Liberia hit the television screens, my mind went to Adam Doley. Many of the perpetrators of the violence in Monrovia were child-soldiers like Adam. He was conscripted into the forces of one of the faction leaders when he was still a teenager. He rose through the ranks over four years until he became a captain with dozens of men under his command.

When I met Adam he had come to Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, to negotiate a peace deal: "I ask the United Nations to come to my rescue. We have been in the forest for four years. We have not seen our parents. We are all frustrated," he told me. Having left his men in the bush, he was seeking incentives to encourage them to lay down their arms, as part of the process of demobilization and disarmament. "Getting disarmed, what will be the results, after so much fighting? We need incentives for the boys. In my area we have up to 2,000 boys who are doing nothing," he lamented.

I came across Adam in a strip of "no man's land" separating the safe part of the city of Buchanan from the dangerous area. It was on the occasion of a tour of five West African states undertaken by UNDP Administrator, Mr. James Gustave Speth, and Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, director of the organization's Africa Bureau. On that day Mr. Speth toured several camps of displaced persons, who had fled the fighting in various parts of the country.

Innocent victims of war

One of the most moving encounters occurred at the trauma counselling centre for women. About a hundred women were seated on wooden sticks stretched between two forked stumps. They had all experienced extreme trauma. Three-quarters of them had been raped, most had lost their husbands and some or all of their children. There were 14 such shelters counselling up to 5,000 women in both individual and group sessions. The group sessions focused on encouraging the women and girls to articulate their experiences, whereas individual counselling was done on a confidential basis.

Some 650 Liberian volunteers help the women put together the shattered pieces of their lives. The women also engage in income-generating activities such as pastry-making, sewing, tie-dye and soap-making. The tents were set up on an elevation called the FDA (Forestry Development Area) where the atmosphere is quieter and less crowded, away from the noisy and overcrowded camps of displaced persons in the city centre.

I realized the difference because we had just been to the Bassa High School where 3,000 helpless, displaced persons were huddled together, sleeping on the bare floor or on straw mats for the more fortunate. They have been there for two years. Moses Daduo, 29, walked us through the shelter he was heading. "We have too many problems here. No slippers. No drinking buckets. Three hand-pumps for 5,342 people," he said. We had to inch our way through the crowd, some of whom had set up stalls to sell anything they could lay a hand on: smoked fish, palm oil, hot pepper. Moses used to be a fisherman back in his village in Neekreen County, but he went to school in Buchanan.

Suffering, but still strong

Ms. Johnson Sirleaf, herself a former finance minister of Liberia, was visibly shaken by the experience: "I am sad to see young people suffering. You have suffered too long but I am happy that you still remain strong to live up to this time," she said. "I came here to know about your situation and try to see how best we can do to make things better. You are strong and it gives me hope." Rebuilding communities and reintegrating displaced persons and returning refugees is one of the goals of UNDP, even while the peace process is not fully restored.

Mr. Trevor Gordon Somers, Special Adviser to the Director in UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa, has an interesting perspective on the peace process in Liberia. In recent years he crisscrossed West Africa and the rest of the continent trying to broker lasting peace in Liberia as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to the country. In a recent interview with *UNDP News*, a staff newsletter, he talked about three obstacles to peace in Liberia: absence of leadership at the national level, lack of harmonization of policies for Liberia on the part of West African states, and a shortage of international resources. Mr. Somers helped to broker the Abuja Agreement in 1995, which sought ways to surmount the three obstacles.

Once an effective cease-fire is implemented and maintained, this plan will provide the basis for the peace that must come in Liberia. For all the people of Liberia, for the child soldiers, for the orphans and the widows, for the displaced and the dispossessed, that peace must come soon. ■

UNDP

Mr. James Gustave Speth, Administrator of the UN Development Programme, visits with Liberian children on a recent tour of West African countries.

**The African Baobab is one of the world's hardiest trees, thriving in even the most arid environment. It is also the tree under which some Africans traditionally meet to decide issues of common concern.*

AFRICA AGENDA

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

3-6 September, Poznan, Poland: Society of Africanist Archaeologists Conference. The 13th Biennial Conference of the Society of Africanist Archeologists. Contact: Ledch Kryzyzaniak, Fax: (48-61) 52-53-06

5-8 September, Washington DC: The Seventh Association for Women in Development (AWID) Conference: Beyond Beijing-From Words to Action. Contact: Karen Mulhauser, Tel: (202) 463-0180

30 September - 4 October, Geneva, Switzerland: World Aid '96, a Global Expo and Conference on International Relief. Contact: Ralph Wright, Tel: (703) 912-6861

2-4 October, Arusha, Tanzania: Agricultural Engineering: Development and the Environment. Organized by Southern and Eastern Africa Society of Agricultural Engineers. Contact: Dr. N. Hatibu, Fax: (255-56) 3718/3748

24-27 October, Michigan, USA: Words and Voices: Critical Practices in African Oral History. Conference organized by the International Institute at the the University of Michigan. Contact: Luise White, Tel: (313) 763-9200

13-17 November, Rome, Italy: World Food Summit. Contact: World Food Summit Secretariat, Tel: (369) 5225-2932; Fax: (369) 5225-5249; Email: food-summit@fao.org

9-13 December, Singapore: First World Trade Organization (WTO) Ministerial Conference. Tel: (41-22) 739-5111

WHAT'S TAKEN PLACE

5-6 December 1995, Geneva, Switzerland: Weapons of War, Tools of Peace: The Media, Military and Private Sector in Conflicts and Humanitarian Reporting. Contact: Michele Hertzschuch, Tel: (41-22) 920-1676

25-27 March, Windhoek, Namibia: Regional Meeting on Public Administration and Development: From Structural Adjustment to improved efficiency in Government. Contact: Susanne Tinkl, DHRS, Tel: (264-61) 23 3034.

10-13 April, Phoenix, Arizona, US: "Africa96" Conference on Business, Trade and Investment Opportunities. Organized by AMI Consultants. Tel: (602) 279-7278; Fax: (602) 279-7703

15-17 April, Harare, Zimbabwe: Conference on Oil Marketing, Risk Management and Finance in Sub-Saharan Africa. Organized by UNCTAD with the Eastern and Southern African Trade and Development Bank. Contact: Lamon Rutten, Tel: (41-22) 907-5770/5014

16-20 April, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso: Nineteenth Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Regional Conference For Africa. Contact: FAO, Tel: (369) 52252932 or 52253420; Fax: (369) 52255249

23-26 April, New York: 2nd meeting of the International Task Force on the development of Africa's Informal Sector. Contact: OSCAL, Tel: (212) 963-5006

27 April - 11 May, Midrand, South Africa: UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) IX Meeting. Contact: K. Kousari in Geneva, Tel: (41-22) 907-5800; Fax: (41-22) 907-0043 or G. Kell in New York, Tel: (212) 963-3817; Fax: (212) 963-0027

10-12 May, Alexandria, USA: Re-interpretations of the Sudan: New Visions: Conference organized by the Sudan Students Association. Contact: Nelson Kasfir, fax: 603-2152

3-14 June, Istanbul, Turkey: The City Summit: The UN Conference on Human Settlements Habitat II. Contact: UN Centre for Human Settlements, Nairobi, Kenya, Tel: (254-2) 623-033; Fax: (254-2) 623-080; Email: Habitat2@unep.no

11 June, Washington DC, USA: Assessment of PVO/NGO Partnership in Africa: Interaction Workshop. Contact: Lisa Freund Rosenblatt, Tel: (202) 667-8227; Fax: (202) 667-8236

AFRICA BOOKS

Reshaping the World Trading System: A History of the Uruguay Round by John Croome (World Trade Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, 1995; 392 pages; sfr. 40.-)

The Economics of Agricultural Technology in Semiarid Sub-Saharan Africa by John H. Sanders, Barry I. Shapiro and Sunder Ramaswamy (The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, USA, 1996; 303 pages; $55)

Development Co-operation: Efforts and Policies of the Members of the Development Assistance Committee by James H. Michel (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, France, 1996; 101 pages; $37)

Working With the Poor: Non-Governmental Organizations and Rural Poverty Alleviation by Roger C. Riddell and Mark Robinson with John de Coninck, Ann Muir and Sarah White (Oxford Universtity Press, UK; 1995; £35)

Dimensions of Development with Emphasis on Africa edited by Tekeste Negash and Lars Rudebeck (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet — The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, Sweden, 1995; 279 pages; £17.95)

Domination or Dialogue? Experiences and Prospects for African Development Cooperation edited by Kjell Havnevik and Brian Van Arkadie, (The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, 1996; 130 pages; £9.95).

Development in Practice — Better Health in Africa: Experience and Lessons Learned by Paul Shaw and Edward Elmendorf and Jean-Louis Lamboray (World Bank, Washington DC, 1995; 240 pages; pb $14.95)

Liberia and Sierra Leone: Anarchy or Peace in West Africa? by Stephen P. Riley, (Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, London, UK, 1996; 28 pages; $25)

Report on the State of Education in Africa 1995: Education Strategies for the 1990s, Orientations and Achievements (UNESCO/BREDA; Dakar, Senegal, 1995; Price not stated)

Urban Development Planning: Lessons for the Economic Reconstruction of South Africa's Cities by Richard Tomlinson, (Humanities Press, New Jersey, USA; $25)

Burundi's Uprooted People: Caught in the Spiral of Violence (US Committee for Refugees, Washington DC, 1995; Price not stated)

The African Development Bank (Volume 1) by E. Philip English and Harris Mule (The North-South Institute, Ottawa, Canada, 1995; 213 pages; Cdn$25)

Girls and Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa: From Analysis to Action (World Bank, Washington DC, 1995; $8.59)

Europe's Preferred Partners?: The Lome Countries in World Trade by Michael Davenport, Adrian Hewitt and Antonique Koning, (Overseas Development Institute, London, UK, 1995; £17.50)

Challenges to the Nation-State in Africa edited by Adebayo O. Olukoshi and Liisa Laakso, (The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, Sweden, 1996; 213 pages; £16.95)

Religion and Politics in Africa by Jeffrey Haynes, (Zed Books, London, UK, 1996; 256 pages; hb $59.95, pb $25)

Africa and Europe: The Changing Economic Relationship edited by Oladeji O. Ojo, (Zed Books, London, UK, 1996; 256 pages; hb $69.95, pb $29.95)

Globalization and Third World Trade Unions: The Challenge of Rapid Economic Change edited by Henk Thomas, (Zed Books, London, UK, 1995; 256 pages; hb $59.95, pb $25)

STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT

The Market Tells Them So: The World Bank and Economic Fundamentalism in Africa by John Mihevc (Third World Network, Penang, Malaysia; 1995; 313 pages; pb $15)

Structural Adjustment and Employment Policy: Issues and Experience by John Toye (International Labor Office, Geneva, Switzerland, 1995; 88 pages; pb $13.50)

Impact of Structural Adjustment in the Public Services: Efficiency, Quality Improvement and Working Conditions (International Labour Office, Geneva, 1995; $15.75)

New Approaches to Poverty Analysis and Policy — III: The Poverty Agenda: Trends and Policy Options edited by Gerry Rogers and Rolph van der Hoeven, (International Labour Office, Geneva, 1995; 205 pages; $27)

Prospects for Recovery and Sustainable Development in Africa edited by Aguibou Y. Yansané (Greenwood Press, Connecticut, USA; 1996; 384 pages; $59.95

AFRICA IN BRIEF

UN Secretary-General urges ban on anti-personnel mines

The agreement by participants in the Conference on Conventional Weapons to curtail the use of anti-personnel land mines within the coming decade reflected "progress" in certain respects, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said in a message to the meeting's concluding session in Geneva on 3 May. But at the same time he expressed "deep disappointment" that the conference did not declare a total ban on mines, which kill and maim tens of thousands of civilians each year.

An estimated 110 mn land mines are scattered in 68 countries, while 37-44 mn mines are active in 11 African countries (other African countries are also affected, but no estimates are available). In Angola, where 9-15 mn land mines are active, some 70,000 people have lost limbs. Some land mines remain active for up to 50 years after they have been laid, disrupting agriculture and transport, in addition to their devastating human toll.

Many non-governmental organizations and a growing number of governments have been campaigning for an outright ban on the manufacture, export and use of land mines. "A total ban on all anti-personnel mines is the only solution," said Mr. Boutros-Ghali in his message, urging the international community to take more resolute action in that direction. ■

Burundi being threatened by 'economic chaos'

Burundi's efforts to end civil strife are being threatened by "economic chaos," warned Finance Minister Salvator Toyi at a recent press conference in Brussels. With a 22 per cent drop in agricultural revenue from 1993 to the end of 1995, and a 16 per cent decline in GDP since 1992, over 60 per cent of the population now lives below the poverty line, compared to 30 per cent before October 1993, he said. Inflation rose from 9 to 19 per cent over the same period.

The situation is aggravated by a drop in coffee output and prices. Coffee is Burundi's main source of foreign exchange. Since a 1994 peak of $4,260 a ton, world prices had dropped by more than half to $2,081 at the end of February. Burundi's coffee crop amounted to only 24,000 tonnes in 1994, more than one-third below early 1990s levels.

Creditors are reluctant to provide more funds as Burundi has been unable to service its debt. Mr. Toyi said that this situation has adversely affected the country's health, education and poverty reduction programmes. He also stressed that young militia members would continue to terrorize Bujumbura and the surrounding countryside if funds are not available to create jobs for them. ■

Using "people's power" to combat hunger, poverty

The Southern African region is among the first to follow up on an ambitious plan to establish "popular coalitions" among international agencies, governments and grassroots organizations to alleviate poverty and hunger in Africa and other parts of the developing world. The plan, endorsed last November by over 1,000 representatives of aid groups and international and civil society organizations at the Brussels Conference on Hunger and Poverty, was discussed in detail in Cape Town at the 19-22 February Workshop on Approaches to Rural Poverty Alleviation in Southern African Development Community (SADC) Countries.

The Brussels Conference, sponsored by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank, drew up a five-point action plan based on the premise that the poor and deprived are able to grasp opportunities for social and economic development. Its strategy is to remedy the main weakness in current international and national actions to fight hunger and poverty — insufficient participation by the poor in decisions affecting their daily lives.

The Cape Town workshop brought together over 160 delegates representing all SADC countries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), bilateral aid agencies, and UN organizations including IFAD and the World Bank. Among the workshops findings were that although a sound macroeconomic environment — achieved by the successful implementation of stabilization and adjustment programmes — is necessary, it

South Africa closes RDP office

The abrupt closure in late March of South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) office has sparked some concern that the government may be backing away from its bold plans to redress the inequities created by apartheid. When first introduced in 1994 by the newly elected government of President Nelson Mandela, the RDP was projected as a $25 bn, five-year programme of social and economic transformation designed to improve living conditions, create jobs, fight poverty and raise educational and health levels.

The office was closed as part of a cabinet reshuffle in which Mr. Jay Naidoo, who had the task of overseeing the RDP, was made Minister of Posts and Telecommunications. Specific RDP projects have been parceled out to line ministries. Its planning functions are now under the Office of Executive Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, while its aid coordinating functions and the special RDP Fund have been placed under the Ministry of Finance. Deputy Finance Minister Gill Marcus announced that with the closure of the RDP Fund, all aid money would now be channeled through the Ministry of Finance, which would act as a "one-stop shop" for donor resources.

A number of non-governmental organizations have charged that by eliminating a distinct RDP office, the government is moving away from its commitment to foster economic growth through meeting basic needs such as provision of education, health and housing, in favour of a trickle-down approach that focuses on wooing investors and big business.

A spokesperson for the ruling African National Congress, which staked its election campaign on the RDP, denied such charges, stating that the placement of development planning under the Deputy President has actually elevated the RDP. Meanwhile, he added, parceling out the RDP's projects and other functions to the ministries was intended to "mainstream" the programme, to make it more integral to the government's broader economic and development strategy. Referring to the previous government's policy, he observed: "There was never an apartheid ministry, yet apartheid functioned very efficiently because it was mainstreamed in all government departments."

is not sufficient for successful poverty alleviation. Workshop participants also noted that rural poverty is fundamentally caused by the people's lack of control over income-generating assets, that the rural poor are highly heterogeneous, and that solutions to rural poverty must be correspondingly differentiated.

The workshop's declaration and action plan, to be endorsed by SADC ministers and heads of state, expressed a consensus on the priority of the poverty alleviation issue in rural development; the need for this issue to be addressed within a partnership framework; and the broad steps needed for significant change and improvement in the regional poverty situation to be achieved. ■

East African leaders sign pact on economic cooperation

Prospects for renewed economic collaboration among countries in East Africa received a boost on 14 March when the presidents of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania signed a cooperation agreement in Arusha aimed at promoting regional integration. The pact, signed by Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, established the Permanent Tripartite Commission Secretariat for East African Cooperation. The secretariat will finalize the guidelines for the regional economic bloc.

The ceremony followed more than two years of preparatory work that began in November 1993 when the three East African states signed a treaty establishing the commission. Headed by the three presidents, the commission will work out a common approach to tariffs, transport services, infrastructure development, energy generation. It will also improve economic policy coordination in order to facilitate the initial phases of East African integration. ■

New programme to combat African livestock disease

A new approach is needed to control the African livestock disease trypanosomiasis since earlier efforts have barely diminished the impact of the malady, concluded the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) at an Africa regional conference held in Burkina Faso on 16-20 April. Transmitted by the tsetse fly over an area of some 9 mn square kilometres, the disease is estimated to kill up to 3 mn animal deaths per year, reducing livestock production by 20-40 per cent, causing direct economic losses of between $600 mn and $1.2 bn annually.

Previous strategies to combat trypanosomiasis were too narrowly focused on controlling the tsetse fly, thereby limiting their effectiveness. A new programme, currently being developed in conjunction with the Organization of African Unity, World Health Organization and other institutions, will aim to "solve the trypanosomiasis problem within the broader context of food security, human health, rural development and sustainable agriculture," FAO said. ■

Philip Ndegwa, 1937-1996

Mr. Philip Ndegwa, one of Africa's best-known economists and financial experts who served in numerous high-level United Nations and other international bodies, died in Nairobi, Kenya, in January after a short illness at the age of 59. He had held the most senior positions in the country's economic planning sector — including Governor of the Central Bank, Economic Adviser to the President, Chairman of Kenya Commercial Bank (the country's largest) and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance.

In the last decade, he had become a central figure in developing Kenya's private sector financial institutions. Because of Mr. Ndegwa's abiding interest in relations between African economies and the outside world, including the World Bank, he was often called upon by the United Nations to serve as adviser. At the time of his death, Mr. Ndegwa was Chairman of, among others, Kenya Airways, the Kenya Revenue Authority and First Chartered Securities.

Research organization for a 'New Africa' founded

With the aim of promoting the African continent's democratization, unification, independence and development, a new pan-African organization for research, mass communications work and action has been established in Harare, Zimbabwe. Known as the New Africa International Foundation, its president is Zimbabwe's Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism Chen Chimutengwende. The Board of Governors includes Mr. Bade Onimode, Ms. Ama Ata Aidoo, Mr. Molefi K. Asante, Mr. Joseph Okpaku Sr, and other well-known academics, as well as Mr. Mapopa Chipeta and Mr. Abdul Mejid Hussein, ministers in the governments of Malawi and Ethiopia, respectively.

According to Mr. Chimutengwende, who is also the National Deputy Secretary for Information and Publicity of the governing Zimbabwe African National Union, the foundation will operate within Africa and internationally to conduct policy research for government institutions; promote democratization; champion the rights of media practitioners, writers and intellectuals; develop networks of collaborators throughout Africa and abroad; and carry out various other activities. Further information can be obtained from: New Africa International Foundation, PO Box 472, Harare, Zimbabwe. ■

Sudan's diplomatic and debt problems worsen

The UN Security Council has passed a resolution ordering diplomatic sanctions against the Sudanese government for allegedly harbouring international terrorists accused of attempting to kill Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, shortly after he arrived in Ethiopia for the June 1995 Organization of African Unity summit. The sanctions call for UN member countries to reduce the number of their diplomats in Khartoum and to put restrictions on Sudanese officials entering their countries. Sudan denied all charges and claimed that the imposition of sanctions would undermine all regional initiatives to resolve the matter.

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said that a recent agreement with the Sudanese government on a formula to clear the country's $1.7 bn repayment arrears to the Fund was still uncertain. The government had not adhered to a previous agreement that required it to pay $4 mn a month for its arrears.

An IMF official noted that heightened international isolation of the country was likely to aggravate the already fragile relationship between the government and the financial institution. The IMF suspended Sudan in 1993 for failing to clear its arrears. The government is expected to come up with "a credible package of policies that can unleash the potential for the economy," the official said. ■

AFRICA WATCH

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

Donors promise $2.6 bn for soft-loan development fund

The concessional lending arm of the African Development Bank (ADB) secured pledges of $2.6 bn from donor-country members during the ADB's 20-24 May annual meeting in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The three-year replenishment of the African Development Fund (ADF), a no-interest facility that benefits low-income African countries, came after a two-and-a-half-year delay caused by donor displeasure over the Bank's management.

ADB President Omar Kabbaj, who was appointed in August 1995, reported to the meeting on his restructuring efforts, which have included firing 70 per cent of the previous management staff and improving loan performance. The ADF replenishment, while a mark of approval over these reform efforts, still fell some $400 mn short of the ADB's initial request. And $1 bn of the amount comes from recycled funds, loan cancellations and arrears on earlier pledges, instead of new money. ■

CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Mozambique, Kenya get renewed donor support

The need for faster economic growth and less dependency on aid were recurring themes at an April Consultative Group (CG) meeting on Mozambique where donors pledged $871 mn for 1996. Of this amount, $567 mn is in grants and soft loans, while the remaining $304 mn is for debt relief.

Donors emphasized the need for increased transparency in Mozambique's management, monitoring and accounting of external aid, as well as the continued use of an integrated sectoral approach to enable them to provide funds in a more flexible manner, and for those funds to be utilized more effectively.

At another CG meeting in March, donors pledged $730 mn for Kenya, much of which was carried over from 1995. They commended the government for its recent efforts to improve the political climate, but expressed concern that the rule of law and justice was yet to be strengthened and applied in Kenya. In April, the IMF officially ended more than a year of deadlock between Kenya and international lending institutions by approving a three-year Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) of $216 mn to support the government's economic reform programme for 1996-1998. ■

UNITED NATIONS

Mid-term review process for UN-NADAF gets under way

Preparations for the September mid-term review of the UN New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) are scheduled to begin 20-21 June during a meeting of the Organizing Session of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Whole at UN headquarters in New York.

The Organizing Session is scheduled to elect a bureau and set up two working groups: one to assess the efforts of African countries to implement UN-NADAF; the other to gauge the commitment and support of the international community, including the UN system, for the New Agenda.

The committee's report, which will include substantial inputs from non-governmental organizations as well as recommendations from the Organization of African Unity, will be submitted to the General Assembly along with proposals on how to sustain economic growth and development in Africa beyond the 1990s. ■

APPOINTMENTS

Michele Sibiloni / WB

Mr. Callisto Madavo *(left) and* **Mr. Jean-Louis Sarbib** *(right) have been named the World Bank's two new Vice-Presidents for Africa. They replace former Vice-President for Africa, Mr. Edward V.K. Jaycox, who retired from the Bank on 31 March. While the post of Vice-President has been split — to facilitate closer high-level contact with the 48 countries of sub-Saharan Africa — the Bank's Africa Region itself will remain unitary, with a single office. Mr. Madavo, of Zimbabwe, is an economist who has been with the Bank since 1969, most recently holding the post of Country Director in the Bank's East Asia and Pacific Region. He will be responsible for Eastern and Southern Africa, as well as for the Special Programme for Africa, the UN Special Initiative on Africa and contact with African institutions. Mr. Sarbib, Algerian-born and a French national, has been with the Bank since 1980 and was Director for the Western African Department of the Africa Region. He will be responsible for Western and Central Africa, and for working with the Capacity Building Initiative, the Global Coalition for Africa and the Special Programme for African Agricultural Research.*

Michele Sibiloni / WB

Mr. Stephen Lewis *(left), who as the former Ambassador of Canada to the UN (1984-1988) chaired the General Assembly committee that drafted the historic five-year UN Programme on African Economic Recovery, has been appointed Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF. During his long public service career, Mr. Lewis has served as the Special Representative of UNICEF (1990-1995); the UN Secretary-General's Special Advisor on Africa (1986-1991); co-chairman of the Political Mobilization Committee for the UN Special Initiative on Africa; and a Canadian parliamentarian. In his new post, Mr. Lewis is responsible for UNICEF's Programme, Public Affairs and Information divisions, as well as the offices of Emergency Operations, Policy Analysis and Evaluation, Strategic Planning, the Executive Board and UN Affairs.*

N. Tabouy / UNICEF

Dr. Richard Jolly *(right), of the United Kingdom, UNICEF's former Deputy Executive Director (1981-1995), has been appointed Special Advisor to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. Dr. Jolly will be responsible for UNDP's Human Development Report. Before joining UNICEF, he was Director of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex for nine years.*

UN Photo / UN

Mr. Sadig Rasheed *(left) is the new Director of UNICEF's Programme Division. Mr. Rasheed, of Sudan, is the former Director of the Public Administration, Human Resources and Social Development Division at the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). He worked for the ECA in various management capacities from 1982 to 1996, and also served as the coordinator of the Secretariat of the UN Special Initiative on Africa, and as secretary of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on the UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development.*